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REGINALD'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XIX.

It is success that colours all in life;
Success makes fools admir'd, makes villains honest,
All the proud virtues of this vaunting world
Fawns on success and power, how'er acquired.

Thomas's Agamemnon.

Who feels no ill
Should, therefore, fear them; and, when fortune smiles,
Be doubly cautious, lest destruction come
Remorseless on him, and he fall unspied.

Sophocles.

SEVEN years had passed since the occurrences detailed in the preceding chapters, and these seven years had wrought great changes in the circumstances of the several characters of our story.

Mr. Reid Westcourt had retired from business, partly in consequence of the urgent solicitations of his wife and daughter, and partly because he had greatly prospered in all his various speculations, and was now accounted a man of wealth.

He had been succeeded in his mercantile house by his late manager, the good Mr. Hutchley, whom a timely legacy from a maiden aunt had saved from a life of privation and drudgery, besides enabling him to give his student-son a choice of professions. It was the leading principle of Mr. Hutchley's business to conduct affairs as the "head" had done before him, and he would have been shocked at the slightest deviation from the precedents established by his late employer.

Of course, on leaving his old business life behind him, Mr. Reid Westcourt had yielded to his wife's long desire for an establishment in the country, and had bought an estate in one of the Midland counties, upon which he had bestowed the title of Westcourt Lodge.

In this new home Mrs. Westcourt was fast forgetting that her husband had ever had any connection with trade, and regarded him only in his new character of landed proprietor.

The Westcourt name and the merchant's wealth

had gained for them an entrance into very good society, although the more exclusive county families had not yet called upon or recognized them.

There was nothing either grand or ancient about Westcourt Lodge, but it pleased its new owners far more than an antiquated mansion would have done. There were no patches of hoary light varied with shade on its walls, no turrets, or mullioned windows, carrying the thoughts back to past centuries.

It was simply an ambitious-looking villa, built of red brick, with wide windows and doors, and "all the modern improvements," as had been duly set forth in the very attractive advertisement that had first called the attention of Mr. and Mrs. Westcourt to the place. It was square in form, constructed on mathematical principles, and had a very new look about it.

In front of the lodge was a very prettily laid-out flower garden, intersected by winding gravel walks; and at a little distance in the rear of the dwelling was a space devoted to vegetables, &c.

The estate consisted of a small plantation of firs and larches, fields, &c., and there were paddocks for the horses—as the merchant's wife now kept her carriage.

The seven years that had elapsed since the removal of Reginald from her father's roof had been passed by Miss Oriana Westcourt in a fashionable boarding-school, where her acquaintances had been quite select enough to please even her ambitious mother.

The last year of the seven was spent by the young lady as a parlour-boarder in a "finishing-school," where she learned the airs and graces that her parents fondly hoped were to make her the future belle of the county.

Her education having at length been pronounced "finished," Miss Oriana was summoned to Westcourt Lodge to take her rightful position in society and in her father's house.

The morning after her return home her parents were seated in Mrs. Westcourt's private parlour, engaged in discussing about their daughter and her prospects.

The lapse of years had not greatly changed the personal appearance of the silk-merchant. He was

more portly in form, perhaps, and decidedly more pompous in manner. His countenance had more than ever a sanctimonious expression, and he had acquired an air of dignity that did not fail to impress his new neighbours and acquaintances. He was always scrupulously well attired in garments of the finest material and most fashionable make, and was fond of walking about his grounds with his hands folded behind him and his head thrown back, as if no care or trouble ever dared disturb his prosperous life. And yet there were times when keen eyes might have noticed an uneasy, apprehensive look upon his face—a look that showed that a secret dread inhabited his soul!

Mrs. Westcourt had changed still less than the merchant. A few white threads were mingled with her black locks, and her forehead had gained a few lines that time or trouble might speedily change into positive wrinkles; but her form had gained in uprightness, as well as in proportions. Her manner had grown overbearing and supercilious, as she deemed consistent with her changed estate; but in other respects she remained unaltered.

"You must acknowledge, Reid," she said, settling her heavy bracelets upon her lace-shaded wrists, "that Oriana has realized all our dreams and the promise of her childhood. She is really very beautiful!"

"I share your opinion, Isabella," replied the merchant. "She is much handsomer than I ever expected her to be. She has also greatly increased in respect for me, which I consider a matter of even greater importance than her beauty. You know very well—for I've told you often enough—that she always failed in filial duty when at home for the holidays in town!"

"But there was a very good reason for her looking down upon you then, Reid," said Mrs. Westcourt. "The dear girl associated with the daughters of noblemen and gentlemen, and it wasn't very pleasant for her to own a tradesman for her father. I am sure I don't blame the poor child," added the weak-minded mother. "I despise trade as much as she does. You will never again have occasion to find fault with her want of respect towards you!"

Mr. Westcourt made no attempt to defend the process by which he had gained his wealth and present position. He said nothing about the dignity of trade, nor how vastly it contributed to the prosperity of nations, nor what a grand foundation it made for the superstructure of society. In truth, he was ashamed that he had ever been a tradesman, and was as anxious to forget the fact as were his wife and daughter.

"Very well, Isabella," he returned. "Our daughter having returned to us beautiful and accomplished, it is right and proper that you should be thinking of her future husband. We are in a most excellent neighbourhood—"

"And there are several eligible young gentlemen with whom I am already acquainted," interrupted Mrs. Westcourt. "Of course, Oriana must marry a wealthy gentleman—if possible, a nobleman. She will have a very tempting fortune of her own, and can marry whom she likes!"

Mr. Westcourt's brow clouded, and he said, uneasily:

"It is now the middle of April, Isabella, and I wish—that is, I have formed ideas different from yours in regard to Oriana's future!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the merchant's wife, with a show of surprise. "What can the month or season have to do with your plans?"

"Why, in June Reginald will attain his majority!"

This announcement made Mrs. Westcourt appear as uneasy as her husband, but after a few minutes' thought she said:

"But, Reid, when your nephew comes of age you have simply to tell him that there is nothing to show that your brother died possessed of the amount bequeathed to his son. The papers are all gone, you know."

"That is what troubles me," interrupted the merchant. "Where could they have disappeared so mysteriously seven years ago? Someone must have abstracted them from my desk, but who could have fathomed the mystery of the secret drawer? The abstraction of those papers has troubled me all these years. They were taken by no ordinary thief, for my other papers and some bank-notes remained untouched. The only thing removed with them was that forged cheque of Fennes—"

"And I have also told you that that clerk must have been the thief," Mrs. Westcourt interposed, in her turn. "It has always been my opinion that he slipped upstairs on the evening of his last visit to us, and opened the desk with a false key. He might have discovered the secret drawer by accident, and taken Reginald's papers as well as his own in his hurry. In that case he burned them long ago to avoid being found out."

"The affair is a very unpleasant one," replied the proprietor of Westcourt Lodge. "If Fennes took the papers and gave them to Reginald or to Mr. Aylmar, we must expect decided trouble in June, as I shall be compelled to give my nephew every penny of his fortune."

"And that would beggar us and our dear Oriana," said Mrs. Westcourt, becoming very pale. "At any rate, we should be obliged to give up the lodge and go back into business again. Oh, Reid, why not seek out Fennes and force a confession from him, if he really took the papers?"

"You forget that I have tried to do so," was the gloomy response, "and all the satisfaction I obtained was Fennes's repeated assurance, 'I have not got the papers you seek.' I couldn't arrest him on suspicion, of course, without injuring myself and bringing out things I wanted concealed. Besides, when I missed that forged cheque I lost my chief hold upon Fennes. It's very singular that his trial has been warded off so long. Oh, if I only knew who really took the papers."

"Perhaps Fennes took them and gave them to Reginald or Mr. Aylmar," suggested the wife. "Couldn't we find out if they be in Reginald's possession?"

"Perhaps so," was the reply. "I ought to have kept my nephew with us instead of leaving him at Aylmar Manor—but, then, I couldn't. We have seen the lad but once since Mr. Aylmar took charge of him, and have but the faintest idea of his character and his personal appearance. However, I am still his guardian, and intend to recall him without delay. He shall spend the remainder of his minority at the lodge."

"But what do you hope to accomplish by bringing him home?"

"Why, I should find out whether or not he had those missing papers or any knowledge of them or their contents. Secondly, during his stay here Oriana must put forth every effort to enlist his affections, so that in the case of the worst she may become his wife. I am sure, Isabella, that our daughter could not do better than marry Reginald Westcourt."

"It would be a good match, Reid, but you forget Reginald's aversion to the dear girl."

"No, I do not. That aversion was a mere childish sentiment, long since forgotten, of course. Oriana is beautiful and accomplished, and Reginald is not quite twenty-one, ardent and impressionable. If we bring the two together they will very naturally fall in love with each other."

"I see. Suppose Reginald falls in love with Oriana, but knows nothing of the missing papers. Shall we then allow them to marry?"

"That will be an after consideration, Isabella. We must keep his fortune in the family, and all our energies must be bent to that end."

Mrs. Westcourt assented, and, after a pause, remarked:

"I used to think that Reginald would marry Willa, if both lived to maturity. I suppose, however, their childish love died out long ago, and they have quite forgotten each other. I almost wish, Reid, that we had kept up Oriana's intimacy with Willa. The Tracys of Lincolnshire are such an excellent family, and it would be so nice to be on visiting terms at Longholme."

"It's too late to think of that now," replied the merchant. "Willa has long since forgotten us—not having been here since her aunt took her away. It is better so, as I would not care to have Reginald meet the child again."

At this juncture a tap came at the door and a liveried servant made his appearance bearing a salver on which was deposited a single letter.

Mr. Westcourt took the letter, and, on the withdrawal of the servant, examined it, saying:

"You know the old adage, Isabella—'Speak of, &c. Here's a letter from Mr. Aylmar, with the Aylmar crest, &c. I wonder what he can have to say to us. Perhaps Reginald is ill.'"

A hasty perusal of the letter quickly corrected the latter supposition, and caused the merchant's brow to darken and grow anxious.

"What does it say, Reid?" questioned Mrs. Westcourt.

"Why, the letter is from Mr. Aylmar, and begs to remind me that in a few weeks Reginald will come of age. Mr. Aylmar ventures to thus remind me in order that there may be no difficulty in regard to rendering up the lad's fortune upon the day he will attain his majority. The letter is cool but decided. I think Mr. Aylmar looks for some trouble from me."

"Then they can't have the missing papers."

"I don't know that. I shall reply to the letter immediately and summon Reginald to the lodge. Oriana must be prepared to charm him and awaken his affections."

"I will call her now," responded Mrs. Westcourt, "and we can explain to her the situation of affairs, and make her understand the part she is to play!"

The merchant's wife accordingly summoned her daughter, and while awaiting her appearance suggested the possibility that Reginald might disregard his uncle's command to come to the lodge.

"Then I shall go for him," was the reply. "But I know that he will obey. He can't very well ignore the fact that I am his guardian!"

At this moment the door opened, and Oriana Westcourt came into the room.

The personal appearance of the young lady seemed to merit her parent's encomiums.

She was tall and fair. There was nothing decidedly intellectual in her countenance, but to many people there was a charm in her dreamy blue eyes, in the languid expression of her face, in the voluptuous fullness of her red lips, and in the creamy tint of her complexion.

There was an indolence about her movements that might have better befit a daughter of the tropics; nevertheless, it could not be denied that she represented a very popular type of beauty, and was quite worthy, in point of personal charms, of her late position as the recognized beauty of her boarding-school.

Greeting her parents politely, Miss Oriana floated—for her large, perfectly developed form seemed to float rather than walk, so easy were her languid movements—to a chair near her mother's, where she waited, without apparent curiosity, to learn the cause of her summons to the presence of her parents.

The merchant stood greatly in awe of his lovely daughter, and his wife therefore began the necessary explanations.

"My dear Oriana," she said, in a tone of motherly pride, "as you are now a young lady about entering society, you have doubtless had some thoughts about marriage?"

Miss Oriana bowed, but her cheeks did not flush at the suggestion, nor did her eye-lids droop.

"Of course," continued the mother, "you have never seen anyone yet who has interested your affections?"

The young lady replied in the negative.

"Do you remember your cousin Reginald, my dear?"

questioned the mother, wondering how she could best state her plans and wishes.

"Very well, indeed," replied Miss Oriana, with more vivacity than she had before shown. "I remember perfectly how he and I used to detect each other, and how devoted he was to little Willa."

"It isn't necessary to remember all that, my dear," responded the politic mother. "Reginald has, if at all like his father, grown to be a very handsome young gentleman. Your father is going to summon him to the lodge, and if you should fall in love with your cousin you will not meet with any opposition from us."

"But, mamma," said Miss Oriana, in a tone of surprise, "is not my cousin penniless, and a dependent upon Mr. Aylmar? Why should you desire me to marry a beggar?"

Mr. Reid Westcourt and his wife exchanged glances of embarrassment.

They had forgotten the ideas they had once instilled into their daughter's breast in regard to her cousin's fortune, and now felt that a truthful explanation of the facts would be rather awkward. Still, it was necessary for the furtherance of their schemes that Oriana should comprehend the exact situation of affairs, and her father said:

"You know nothing of business matters, my child, and you would not, therefore, comprehend a thorough explanation if I were to make it. It is enough to say that your uncle left his son a handsome fortune, which was to become Reginald's on attaining the age of twenty-one. He will attain that age in a few weeks!"

Miss Oriana looked interested, and her father, encouraged by her respectful attention, continued:

"This fortune, my dear, I shall find very difficult to restore. The papers referring to it were stolen from me years ago, and if Reginald should possess them, he can claim his property and obtain it. If not, he can demand, or rather prove nothing."

"I see," commented the young lady.

"I intend to invite Reginald to the lodge to spend the remaining weeks of his minority here," resumed the merchant. "Nothing could give me greater pleasure than to have you greet your cousin with warmth and kindness, and win his heart during his stay here."

"And suppose I marry him?" asked Miss Oriana, "shall you find it then so difficult to render up his fortune?"

"Not at all," declared Mr. Westcourt. "I desire the fortune to be yours, Oriana. I have enough for myself and your mother to maintain us in luxury so long as we live, but from my own property I cannot give you a magnificent dowry and give Reginald back his fortune besides, and then continue living in our present style. In fact, my dear, I have long been accustomed to count upon my nephew's fortune as my own. It is not necessary for me to explain myself farther, nor is it necessary that you should ever exchange a word with your cousin on the subject of his property."

"I comprehend you perfectly, papa," remarked Miss Oriana, thoughtfully, and without any apparent loss of respect for her father. "I will carry out your wishes to the letter. I daresay I shall like my cousin very much indeed, and I remember that his branch of the Westcourt family was much more aristocratic than our own. I received a great deal of consideration at school from the fact that I was the niece of the late Sir Reginald and Lady Westcourt. I wish, papa, you would have my cousin come immediately to the lodge. It would be pleasant to have a young person to talk to."

Mr. and Mrs. Westcourt were alike overjoyed at their daughter's reception of their communication. Both had feared that, in consequence of the training she had received, Miss Oriana hoped to win a titled husband and would look contemptuously upon her cousin, but they had not understood their daughter's character.

While Oriana had an intense appreciation of rank and wealth she was yet too indolent to put forth an effort to acquire either, and was, therefore, rather pleased than otherwise at having her future husband selected for her.

"I am glad to find you so sensible," declared the merchant, "and I have no doubt, my dear, but that Reginald will soon love you as you deserve. Shut up as he has been with that old bachelor at Aylmar Manor, your beauty will fascinate him and you will soon behold him at your feet."

Miss Oriana smiled complacently with gratified vanity, and glanced at her rounded arms and pretty hands with a look that showed how entirely she shared her father's opinion of her charms.

The parents spent additional time in making their daughter's work plain to her, carefully avoiding any explanations that might tend to weaken her filial respect, but giving her as clear an idea of the circumstances as possible, and they had the satisfaction of perceiving that they had acquired in her an able coadjutor.

At length Miss Oriana took her departure for her dressing-room and favourite couch, for her habits were as indolent as her movements, and, after some farther deliberation with his wife, Mr. Westcourt proceeded to indite an epistle to Mr. Aylmar, and one to Reginald Westcourt, desiring the immediate presence of the latter at the lodge, there to remain until he should attain his majority.

"If he do not come on receipt of this letter," declared the merchant, when he had finished, "I shall go in person for him!"

Mrs. Westcourt approved this resolution, and the letters were immediately dispatched by a servant to be posted at the nearest village, half a mile distant.

CHAPTER XX.

A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,
Fram'd in the prodigality of nature,
Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal;
The spacious world cannot again afford.

Shakespeare.

Light to thy path, bright creature! I would charm
Thy being, if I could, that it should be
Ever as now thou dreamest, and flow on,
Thus innocent and beautiful, to heaven.

Willis.

On the morning subsequent to the scenes described in the preceding chapter Mr. Aylmar and Reginald Westcourt were engaged discussing about the relatives of the latter, as the two gentlemen sat in the pretty breakfast-room of the manor at their early morning repast.

The hand of time had touched but lightly the proprietor of Aylmar Manor.

The only change that could have been seen in him, was the softening of the hard lines about his mouth, and the tempering of his former cynical expression into one of gentle sadness and kindness.

Reginald had proved a blessing to him, and in the fresh society of the lad he had found a new interest in life.

He loved his adopted heir as if he had been his own son.

Reginald, of course, was changed. He was now nearly twenty-one, and as fine a type of a young English gentleman as could anywhere be found. His forehead was broad and high; his eyes dark and clear, contrasting with his fair hair; and the expression of his countenance was frank and open-hearted. He was intellectual and deeply read, fond of books and abstruse questions, yet not neglectful of athletic sports, as was evident by his broad shoulders and tall manly figure, as well as by the healthy flush upon his cheeks. He had entirely outgrown or overcome the boyish delicacy of constitution that had once inspired his uncle with such hopes of becoming his heir, and was in every respect the pride and joy of Mr. Aylmar's heart. He was very popular with the tenants upon the estate, and was the idol of good Mr. Podley, the steward, and Mrs. Podley, the worthy housekeeper, the latter declaring that she "had worshipped him from the moment she set eyes on him."

"We shall, doubtless, receive a letter from Mr. Reid Westcourt this morning, my dear boy," observed Mr. Aylmar, in response to a remark from Reginald. "Still, he may choose to ignore my letter warning him to prepare for a settlement of your accounts upon your birthday."

"Perhaps he intends keeping my fortune for his own use," suggested Reginald, gravely. "Do you think the thing possible, sir?"

"I do," was the reply. "Your father was a most unbusiness-like man, and placed implicit confidence in his brother, so that Mr. Reid Westcourt was enabled to manage matters to suit himself. But your fortune shall not be lost without an effort, my boy. If we had but a single paper to show—anything indeed besides a copy of the will!"

"My father must have left some papers——"

"Which your uncle may have destroyed! He has probably been careful to leave no such thing in existence. But never mind, my dear boy. If you lose your father's legacy you will not be poor. Remember that you are my adopted heir!"

Reginald directed a glance of mingled affection and gratitude at his friend, and then his thoughts seemed to wander towards a pleasanter subject, for he became abstracted and smiled, unconsciously to himself.

"What are you thinking of, Reginald?" asked Mr. Aylmar, watching the play of expression upon the noble countenance of the youth. "Not of your uncle, I fancy? A penny for your thoughts!"

Reginald started and seemed at a loss how to reply. After a moment's reflection he said:

"I was thinking, sir, of my best and dearest friend—except you—and wishing that I could see her. I mean little Willa Heath, whom I have not seen for seven long years. I was reading in a county paper yesterday that Miss Tracy, of Longholme, and her niece, Miss Heath, had returned from their long sojourn in Scotland."

There was a trace of emotion on Mr. Aylmar's face as he heard this announcement, and he bent over his plate to conceal it. His voice, however, was calm as he answered:

"So they have returned at last to stay? I owe you reparation, Reginald, for having separated you so long from your childhood's friend, but, really, I don't see how you could have kept up an intimacy with her—particularly as her aunt carried her to Scotland the year after adopting her. Why not ride over to Longholme, which is but a few miles distant, and see the little girl?"

Reginald's face became radiant with joy, showing how tenderly he had cherished the image of little Willa during all those years of change and separation.

"I'd like to go to-day, sir," he exclaimed, eagerly. "Won't you go too?"

Mr. Aylmar shook his head, and his voice was not quite firm as he answered:

"I cannot go, Reginald. It would unman me to meet Johanna Tracy—Willa's aunt. Some day, when the wound becomes less sore, I'll tell you why."

He paused, encountering Reginald's gaze of affectionate sympathy, and he leaned forward, clasping the youth's hand, as he said:

"You know?"

"Only a little gossip, sir, that Podley told me on my first arrival at the manor, when showing me the picture-gallery. He could have told me very little, since what he said was the fruit of his own observations. He said that you and Miss Tracy had loved——"

"It was I that loved, not she," interrupted Mr. Aylmar, his voice quite breaking down. "I am glad you know my secret, Reginald, for though I do not like to talk of it, your unspoken sympathy will do me good. I have long carried a weary heart in my breast. You wouldn't think it, my boy, would you?"

Reginald pressed the hand he held in silence.

"We understand each other," said Mr. Aylmar, after a struggle to recover his self-possession, "and we need not allude to this subject again at present. Some day I will unburden my whole soul to you, but not yet—not yet. You see how sore my heart is still. But," he added, "go over to Longholme to-day, my boy, see Willa—and—Miss Tracy. Tell me how she looks and if she be well and happy."

Reginald promised to pay particular regard to Miss Tracy's appearance, and Mr. Aylmar then arose and paced the floor until he had fully regained his usual equanimity.

When at length he resumed his seat at the table with a cheerful smile, which touched Reginald far more than sighs could have done, he changed the conversation to Mr. Reid Westcourt again.

His first remark, however, had scarcely been uttered when Mr. Podley entered with the morning letter-bag which Reginald opened. Among the contents was the merchant's double letter written the previous day.

"Ah! here's a letter from Mr. Reid Westcourt!" exclaimed Mr. Aylmar, when the steward had withdrawn. "And here is an enclosure for you, my son!"

Reginald perused the letter enclosed for him, and Mr. Aylmar read the one addressed to himself. When they had concluded they silently exchanged letters, and finally Mr. Aylmar said:

"He says the same thing to both, my dear boy—he wants you to visit Westcourt Lodge until you attain your majority."

"I wonder what can be his object in wanting me there," exclaimed Reginald. "He certainly has no affection for me. What had I better do about going, sir?"

"Why, he implies a threat that if you do not go on receiving the letter he will come for you. He is your guardian, Reginald, and has allowed you to remain with me all these years without seeing you. I shall miss you extremely, yet I think you had better go. I wish I could have been invited to accompany you, but be on your guard against any plots he may form."

Reginald replied in the affirmative, and remarked that a visit to Westcourt Lodge would be extremely distasteful to him.

"I know it will, Reginald," was the reply, "but the weeks will pass quickly. I hardly know what judgment to form of Mr. Reid Westcourt. Sometimes, when I think how he has left you with me all these years I have been ready to retract some of my harsh suspicions of him. A short residence at the lodge will soon show you what manner of man he is!"

"Then I am really to go?" said Reginald.

"I think you had better—since you can't do otherwise," responded Mr. Aylmar, with a smile. "If I find I can't do without you I'll follow you and stop at the village nearest the lodge. I suppose I shall do so, for your presence is necessary to my happiness, Reginald! Leave the matter to me. Go to Longholme to-day, and I will write to Mr. Reid Westcourt that you will set out for the lodge two days hence!"

Reginald expressed his thanks, and Mr. Aylmar resumed:

"Your twenty-first birthday must be spent at the manor, as the tenants are going to celebrate that happy event. I intend making a grand festival on your coming of age, my dear boy. Willa shall be here, and indeed all the neighbourhood for miles around. I shall stipulate with Mr. Reid Westcourt that you shall return in time!"

"How very kind you are to me!" said Reginald, with emotion. "I couldn't be treated with more consideration or have more honours bestowed upon me if I were your own son, Mr. Aylmar!"

"So you are my own son by affection and adoption," replied his friend, brushing a tear from his eyes. "There, there, Reginald: you must be off to Longholme, if you intend returning this evening. Such a meeting as yours with Willa will be can't be got over in an hour. Away with you, while I write to Mr. Reid Westcourt!"

Reginald complied with this command, retiring to his own rooms, from which he emerged in due time attired for his ride.

On returning to the breakfast-room Mr. Aylmar said:

"I have ordered your horse, my dear boy. I believe you are so excited at the prospect of meeting your little Willa that you forgot to order Selim to be brought round!"

"So I did!" exclaimed Reginald, blushing at his own forgetfulness and excitement, and at his friend's playful bantering. "But Willa can't be 'little' now, sir. She must be at least sixteen—ah, seventeen. I presume she is as tall as her aunt!"

"Very likely," returned Mr. Aylmar, with a sigh. "How the years fly! Give Willa my love and tell her that I remember her mother very well. Be sure and notice how Miss Tracy looks—though, to be sure, you couldn't help looking at her again and again!"

Mr. Aylmar's manner was a little restless and excited, as if it were himself who was going to meet Miss Tracy, and he accompanied Reginald to the door, watching him spring lightly upon his magnificent thoroughbred steed, and then, with a sigh, re-entered the dwelling.

"Oh, if Mr. Aylmar could only marry the lady to whom he has been so long and devotedly attached!" thought Reginald, as he rode away at a rapid pace. "If I could only know that he was truly happy! If Miss Tracy could only know how devotedly he loves her to this day! I wish I could see him with a loving wife and children! Of all men in the world he seems to be best fitted to make a woman happy and children good and noble. How could Miss Tracy refuse him?"

With these thoughts Reginald hastened onward, but gradually gave place to tender memories of Willa, whom he was now about to visit, and his heart was overcome with love for the darling of his boyhood.

In his own mind he lived over again the scenes of past years, remembering how Willa had assisted him to pack his trunk when he had been forced to leave a pleasant home for a life of privation, and how she had given him her earthly treasure—the money given her by her dying mother.

"It's next my heart now!" thought he, his eyes moistening with tears. "The blessed, self-sacrificing little darling! Oh, if I could only pay her for all her goodness to me! I wonder if she has changed?"

And then Reginald reviewed that scene, when in his uncle's shop he discovered the loss of his purse, and how bravely Willa faced the dangers of the great noisy City and brought it to him! How often he had thought of it since! Her earnest little face, as it then appeared, had made a picture in his memory never to grow faint or be forgotten.

As he neared his destination he began to get excited, and wondered if Willa would know him, or if he would have to recall himself to her remembrance. This idea suggested speculations as to her appearance, and he endeavoured to imagine a very tall young lady, with a very sedate countenance, above which her hair was smoothly braided.

"I suppose that's about how she looks now!" he thought, with an inward groan. "But no matter how much she has changed, I shall always think of her as the most innocent, most true-hearted, and bravest little creature that ever existed—just what she was seven years ago."

Thus torturing himself with forebodings and recollections, Reginald pressed onward, in due time arriving near his journey's end.

He had never seen Longholme, but knew that it was near a small village.

"I must be almost there!" he thought, checking his horse's speed to a walk. "I think I'll ask the first person I meet, for I may have taken the wrong road!"

As he arrived at this conclusion he observed at one side of the road, under the shade of a spreading

tree, a groom in livery, having in charge two horses. one of them a beautiful Arabian, whose back was graced with a lady's saddle.

"Is this the road to Longholme, my good man?" asked Reginald, halting.

"It is, sir," replied the groom, touching his hat, respectfully, while a smile played on his face. "Longholme beas a mile farder on, sir—this side the village."

The young gentleman thanked him for the information, and rode on, thinking:

"The groom either lives at Longholme or the vicinity. He must be exercising the horses, as there is no lady within sight!"

Passing down a small hill, Reginald left the groom out of sight, and came in view of a charming scene, which he instinctively paused to gaze upon.

At the foot of the hill, in a shallow gorge, flowed a little brook whose clear waters rippled over a bed of stones. On each side of the brook were sloping banks sprinkled with flowers, forming a very pretty scenery.

But it was not the brook or the flowers that attracted Reginald's attention, but the figure of a young girl, as slight and delicate as a fairy, with tiny bare feet, faintly crossing the water upon some stones she had formed into a bridge.

She was habited in a dark green riding-habit, and her head was crowned with a low soft hat from which drooped a scarlet plume. Under the hat might be seen a profusion of clustering hair, but from his position Reginald could not see her face.

She carried her shoes, &c., in one arm, and the other held a collection of wild-flowers which she had evidently just collected.

"What a beautiful figure," thought Reginald. "She ought to have a lovely face to match it. And she isn't tall. I don't like tall women. If I ever marry, I shall marry a delicate little being like that water-witch down there—someone that can nestle in my arms while I carry her if I like."

For the moment he had forgotten Willa in his interest in the active little being who had already crossed the gorge, secured her flowers, and was essaying her return.

"What an original young lady this flower-gatherer must be," mused the young man. "Evidently, that groom I met is waiting for her, while she so independently gathers flowers."

He watched with great interest her return over the slippery stones, and as she reached the bank heard her utter a low silvery laugh full of music and happiness, that thrilled his heart like the tone of long-unheard bells.

As the young lady donned her foot apparel, Reginald suddenly bethought himself that he had been witnessing a scene not meant for his eyes, and reluctantly started Selim.

At the same moment the young lady looked up, encountered his gaze, and turned, as if alarmed, hastening in the direction of the waiting groom and horses.

"Now, I daresay I might meet that young lady a hundred times in society," soliloquized Reginald, philosophically, as he left the gorge behind him, "and never imagine her capable of acting out that bit of nature. She has a good warm heart, I am sure!"

Arousing himself from his speculations in regard to the flower-gatherer, Reginald began to think of his meeting with Willa, and he felt a very natural desire to perfect his toilet by the use of brush before meeting her. Acting upon this desire, he did not pause at the great gates leading to Longholme, but hastened on to the village inn.

Here his horse was attended to and his toilet improved, and after some unavoidable delay, he rode back to Longholme. The lodge-keeper swung open the gates at his approach, and he rode into a broad avenue, shaded with lime trees, which led directly to the main entrance of the mansion.

Longholme was an old place. The trees and the dwelling belonged to a past century, and both were grand and noble beyond comparison with modern villas. The house itself was a great structure, with wings of later date than the main building, and possessed a magnificent portico supported by massive columns.

Reginald rode up to the portico, alighted, throwing the bridle of his horse to a groom who appeared to be in waiting for him, and then knocked at the door for admittance, which he speedily obtained.

He was ushered through a wide corridor, with a polished oaken floor, into a drawing-room of magnificent proportions, furnished in the most luxurious style known to modern upholsterers.

He seated himself, after a glance at the pictures adorning the walls, but had hardly done so, when Miss Tracy made her appearance.

Willa's aunt looked scarcely a day older than when Reginald first beheld her, but appeared sadder, sweeter, and lovelier. She looked like one who carries in her bosom a secret grief, but she made no parade of melancholy.

Attired in a rich gray silk, with a knot of scarlet velvet ribbons at her throat, she seemed at once elegant and youthful, and Reginald felt a return of his boyish enthusiasm in regard to her.

As she advanced the thought flashed through his mind that Miss Tracy and Mr. Aylmer had been formed by nature for each other, there seeming something in each to remind him of the other.

"Mr. Reginald Westcourt," said Miss Tracy, with a smile, glancing at the card Reginald had sent to her. "Willa's old friend, of course—the Reginald of whom I hear so much every day."

"Does Willa remember me so well?" asked the young man, in joyful surprise.

"Remember you?" repeated Miss Tracy, relinquishing Reginald's hand which she had clasped warmly. "Willa is not one to forget a friend. She is one of the most faithful and true-hearted persons I ever knew."

Reginald flushed, as if he had been listening to praise of himself, and resumed his seat as Miss Tracy took one near him, glancing expectantly towards the door.

"Willa does not know that you are here," said Miss Tracy, reading the expression of his face. "I preferred to give her an unexpected pleasure, and so informed her only that a friend wished to see her."

"Thank you," replied the young gentleman, pleased at the lady's consideration. "Has Willa changed in personal appearance since I saw her?"

"Not more than yourself, Mr. Westcourt," was the reply. "I am sure I should not have known you without your explanatory card, and Willa will be as puzzled to recognize you as I should have been."

Reginald's heart sank at this suggestion, and he waited nervously for the appearance of the tall young lady into which he imagined Willa had matured.

He had not long to wait, for quick, gentle footsteps were heard upon the polished floor of the corridor, and Willa Heath entered the drawing-room.

Instinctively, with his heart throbbing fast and loud, Reginald arose to greet her.

Instead of the formidable personage he expected, he beheld the flower-gatherer who had attracted his attention at the brook an hour before—the airy water-sprite whose graceful movements had challenged his admiration.

The face, which he had not seen under the brim of her pretty hat, was bewitchingly lovely, the luminous dark gray eyes shining under a gentle brow, and veiled by long dark lashes, the clear, pure complexion colourless, save a pink flush in the cheeks; the delicate aquiline nose, with its sensitive nostrils, and perfect lips of a vivid crimson hue. Her hair was worn, as in her childhood, quite short, and clustering in short ringlets close to her beautiful head. To render her countenance quite perfect, it retained its look of purity and innocence, showing how perfectly she was unspotted from the world.

Her figure was most exquisite, yet not tall, showing that nature had formed her to reign by love rather than by a commanding form and haughty demeanour.

All this Reginald saw with mingled wonder and surprise, and then his gaze centred in her sparkling face, in her soulful, splendid eyes.

Willa paused, gazing at him as if fascinated, and then she broke the silence with a glad cry, and sprang to his arms, exclaiming:

"Oh, Regie! At last! I have looked for you so long, Regie!"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

A SUDDEN heat of 572 deg. Fah. will ignite gunpowder; flame will not ignite it unless it remains long enough in contact with the grains to heat them to redness.

THE Hercules is to be constructed with mounted sides, similar to the Pallas and Research, to enable her battery guns to be fired ahead and astern in a line with the vessel's keel, in addition to which she will be provided with one or more guns at her bow.

GLASS may be readily drilled by using a steel drill hardened and not "drawn" at all; run fast, with a sharp drill, wet with spirits of turpentine and feed light. The operation will be more speedy if the turpentine be saturated with camphor gum.

M. SAYERS recommends as a light for photographers the following mixture:—Twenty-four grammes nitrate of potash dried and powdered; seven grammes of flowers of sulphur, and seven of red sulphuret of arsenic.

At a meeting of the Chemical Society, recently, Dr. Daubeny read a paper on Ozone, embodying the results of an extensive series of observations at Torquay and Oxford. Dr. Daubeny found in the three winter months (January, February, and March of the years 1864-5-6) at Torquay that the south-west and westerly winds were most charged with

ozone, and the north wind the least. At Oxford, during the summer months of the same years, the easterly winds indicated the most, and the north-westerly the least. These results confirm the well-known influence of the sea in augmenting the supply of ozone. The difference between the maximum and minimum indications at Oxford, situated inland, being much less than at Torquay. His experiments confirmed those of Dr. Gilbert as to the absence of ozone from the oxygen given off by plants exposed to sunshine whilst immersed in water. In the air exhaled from growing plants, in 32 cases out of 57 plants experimented upon he found a sensibly larger proportion of ozone than in the surrounding atmosphere, from which he regards the production of ozone in the process of vegetation as one of nature's means of purifying and restoring the equilibrium of the atmosphere. He was also disposed to believe that plants took an active part in the destruction of pernicious organic compounds originating in the process of decay, or from the waste of animal organisms. There was more ozone found near the sea than inland—a greater amount in the country towns, and more outside a building than in its inhabited rooms.

THE wear of a locomotive boiler is from five to eight years, during which it will have evaporated ten million gallons of water.

A COATING of gold or silver leaf on the object-glass of a telescope will enable the observer to look at the sun for a length of time without injury to the eyes, and without loss of definition in the solar disc.

IN eighteen experiments with oleander leaves exposed to the sun from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., in an atmosphere rich in carbonic acid, a square metre of foliage decomposed on the average over a litre of carbonic acid per hour, while in darkness only 7-100ths of a litre of carbonic acid were produced per hour.

THE King of Wurtemberg has decided on using the Swiss rifle model. The Bavarian Ministry has selected the Federal pattern. In the Grand Duchy of Baden the Prussian needle-gun will probably be chosen. In Hesse no decision has as yet been come to, but certainly a different one will be adopted.

A SIMPLE method of case-hardening small cast-iron work is to make a mixture of equal parts of pulverized prussiate of potash, sal ammoniac, and saltpetre. The articles must be heated to a dull red, rolled in this powder, and then plunged into a bath of four ounces of sal ammoniac and two ounces of prussiate of potash to the gallon of water.

M. NOBLE suggests a simple and effectual method of rendering nitro-glycerine temporarily non-explosive either by heat or percussion. If it be required to restore the nitro-glycerine to its former state, all that need be done is to add water to the mixture; the methylic alcohol will thus be absorbed, and the nitro-glycerine be precipitated to the bottom, whence it may be extracted by decantation.

THE TALLOW-TREE.—The tallow-tree of China which gives rise to a vast trade in the northern parts of that empire, has been introduced into India. It grows with great luxuriance in the Dhoons and in the Kohistan of the North-Western provinces and the Punjab, and there are now tens of thousands of trees in the government plantations of Kowlaghir, Hawul Baugh, and Ayar Telle, from which tons of seeds are available for distribution. Dr. Jamieson prepared from the seeds 100 lb. of tallow, and forwarded 50 lb. to the Punjab Railway, in order to have its properties as a lubricator for railway machinery tested. For burning, the tallow is excellent; it gives a clear bright, inodorous flame, and is without smoke. The tree fruits abundantly both in the Dhoons and the plains, and grows with great rapidity, many trees raised from seeds introduced eight years ago being now 6 ft. in circumference three feet from the ground. The timber is white and close-grained, and well fitted for printing-blocks. The leaves, too, are valuable as a dye.

STREAM FIRE-ENGINE.—A new fire-engine, made by Mr. W. Roberts, of Millwall, for the East and West India Dock Company, was recently added to their fire-extinguishing plant. This engine, like most by the same maker, is constructed almost entirely of metal, a wood lining, or more properly cover, being on the seats and footboards for the men. Upon its arrival at the docks it was taken to the basin, and notwithstanding it was blowing half a gale, which sadly interfered with the draught, steam was raised to 100 lb. per inch in nine minutes and twenty-seven seconds. After working about one hour the fire was dropped and the boiler blown out, and fresh water pumped in, when the fire was again lighted, and 100 lb. pressure obtained in seven minutes fifty-seven seconds, and the engine started and kept working about another hour. No attempt was made to measure height or distance in consequence of the wind, but the performance was perfectly satisfactory to the gentlemen representing the Dock Company. A second engine by the same maker is nearly completed for the East India Dock.



[OLD MOLL STARTLES HER ASSAILANTS.]

GENEVIEVE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

CHAPTER IX.

"THERE was a woman standing opposite the house of Mr. Merton when I came by," said the young man. "She was so absorbed in thought that I nearly stumbled over her. I should not have thought of it but for the strange expression on her face. It almost frightened me, it was so wild, and sad, and utterly wretched. And she was looking straight into the parlour windows, where the lights were just flashing up, and the curtains undrawn."

"Was she tall and slight, with a gray shawl around her?" asked Tim, suddenly.

"Yes; and her eyes were the largest and saddest I ever saw," answered the youth. "I am positive her distress, whatever it was, had connection with that house."

"I've seen her half a dozen times, just about this time of the evening," reiterated Tim, eagerly. "I never thought, though, it was *our* house which interested her, but I shouldn't wonder if you were right."

Moll listened attentively.

"It is worth consideration," she said, slowly. "Young man, you shall not regret your service in my cause, be assured of that. Continue faithful and zealous."

The youth bowed and made his way out of the chamber, drawing a long breath of relief, as if thankful to escape from uneasy influences, the moment he gained the street again.

"Tim," said Moll, "have we gained the longed-for ray of light?"

"The Lord send!" answered faithful Tim. "It goes to my heart to think of you, fretting and pining in this dreary place, and he so triumphant, and honoured, and successful."

Moll stretched out her hand to grasp his.

"Tim, Tim, we shall reckon it all well spent if only the end is gained. I feel encouraged and hopeful. Anything, even a false clue, is better than this dreary stagnation. I think something will come of the draft, but I cannot imagine what the woman has to do with our affair; yet we cannot afford to neglect either."

"Perhaps the woman is still there. I know she always comes back in a short time."

"Let us go out into the street and see," said Moll,

rising at once. "We need not keep together to draw the attention of any of the servants yonder, but you may go a little in advance of me."

They went down into the street, and quietly turned the corner. In a moment after reaching the square Tim slackened his steps, and coming to Moll's side, whispered:

"Look yonder, just in the shade of that column. There is a woman there. Let us cross over and walk on the same side."

Moll, falling again into the rear, picked her way across on the stones.

The light from the lamps streamed full upon the shrinking figure, which, half-crouching behind the stone column upholding a heavy portico roof, seemed to feel itself obscured and hidden.

Tim walked softly, and so did Moll, and both had full view of the upturned face ere the woman became aware of their scrutiny.

The shawl had half-fallen, for the small hands which had held it were clasped together as if in agonized entreaty.

The eyes—the youth was right, they were wonderfully large, and full of wild, piteous grief—were fixed with intense and absorbed interest on a single window of the house opposite.

What were they searching for?

What was there in the brilliant room, of which one undrawn shade gave a glimpse, to so stir the heart of the unhappy creature?

Moll questioned this eagerly, and followed that glance almost as searchingly.

The gilded picture-frame, looming out from the warm, brown tints of the hall, half of a statue-crowned *Etagerie*, a crimson velvet chair, with a rim of dark wood bursting into a rich garland of leaves and acorns, and the thin, stern profile of Richard Merton.

This was what that one window gave to the outside gaze, and that but for a moment, for even while Moll was watching the living picture, there was a radiant figure sweeping between them.

The bright glare of the gas shone on the glistening folds of her purple satin dress, and caught in a glittering line on the gold bracelet on her arm, and the jet necklace about her throat.

Annabel Merton lifted her fair white arm.

The curtain fell.

It was all a blank.

A low, shuddering sigh came hoarsely from beneath the gray shawl.

The eyes withdrew; oh, how slowly and reluctantly! The lips quivered sadly, and Moll caught the words:

"Not to-night, not to-night. Oh, heaven, have pity upon my wretchedness!"

In a moment the woman glanced suspiciously at the two figures hesitating on the pavement, and wrapping the shawl once more about her, hurried away at a pace which Moll could not attain.

Tim, however, understood the meaning of her emphatic gesture, and hurried after her.

It was nearly two hours ere he returned to the chamber to which Moll had retired to wait for him.

"Did you trace her? Have you learned anything?" demanded the old woman.

Tim shook his head dubiously.

"I gave chase, but it was a tough match, and I was pretty well used up when I overhauled her. No clipper ever showed a lighter heel, and twice I made sure she had out-sailed me; but we brought up alongside at last, and where do you think she put in for harbour? As nice and pretty a place as ever you saw; and when I asked the folks on the other side who lived there, they said Mr. Philip Leigh."

"Philip Leigh!" ejaculated old Moll. "So then it's another affair entirely. Poor creature! Was she watching for him? I am grieved to think it. I have only heard good reports of him. So, then, there is one hope wrenched away. But the other is left. Tim, I am restless and uneasy to-night. I wish I might learn something more about that draft."

"If there was anything I could do," said Tim, doubtfully.

"But there is not, I know it well. Faithful Tim, go back and rest; you are tired. I cannot dispense with your services, and I must be careful that you do not overtask your strength. Go home, Tim. Sleep peacefully. Would there were more faithful hearts like yours in this deceitful world. My blessing accompanies you wherever you go."

Tim seized the outstretched hand, and wrung it affectionately, and then slowly wended his way back to the footman's narrow chamber in the upper storey of Merton House.

When he had gone Moll took down a small well-worn Bible, and read quietly, something like half an hour.

Then she put the volume back upon the shelf, and began pacing to and fro across the floor.

Twice she paused to lift the curtain and look into the silent courtyard.

It was quite evident one of those disquieting, restless moods, which are so difficult for the calmest of us to resist, had come upon her. She glanced towards the couch uneasily, muttering:

"It's no use for me to think of going to bed. I

shall not sleep at all. I will go out. A good sniff of the river breeze will set me right, maybe."

So saying, she went down the stairs quietly, and, taking the latch-key with her, passed out into the street.

It was a gusty night, and troops of thin clouds were scudding across the sky, obscuring the stars and the light of the young moon, whose slender thread of silver looked down upon her from between the high roofs as she stepped out, but withdrew in an instant behind a dark mass of purple-gray cloud.

Old Moll shivered a little.

"Is it an omen?" muttered she. "Oh, can it be possible this moon shall wax and wane and I be still unsuccessful and discouraged?"

She was evidently familiar with the streets of the city, and a good pedestrian, notwithstanding her slow, measured steps, and she took the shortest route from that retired and quiet neighbourhood towards the noisier business streets, and crossing them swiftly, turned down the long, dim, deserted way, lined on either side with tall warehouses.

There were still many people out. Some hurrying home from a long day of toil, others eagerly returning from an evening of amusement, and not a few idlers lounging around the doors of club and gaming-house.

Moll's queer figure awoke no surprise.

She went straight on her way, molesting no one, and was thus far undisturbed. Yet her sharp eyes took in more than one would have suspected of the different phases of life exhibited around her.

She lost not a word of the wretched woman, who, with a thin shawl wrapped around her loosely enough to give a glimpse of her uncovered shoulders, with a smile that was horrible and revolting on her haggard features, touched lightly the arm of a young man who was swiftly turning the corner.

Moll saw him shake her off with a low rebuke, and watched the miserable creature sink back into a dark doorway, and creep out again as a pair of noisy fellows came swaggering down the street. She stood just beneath the brilliant flood of light from a great lamp, which gave the public invitation to a billiard-saloon, and the hollow, despairing eye, and famished-looking face, were pitiful to see. But the two men pushed her away with a coarse jest.

Moll saw a great tear upon the hollow cheek, and just as the woman pulled the shawl over her face, and was turning to flee from the approach of a noisy crowd emerging from the house, a gentle hand was laid upon her shoulder.

"Poor wretch! pitiable sinner! why are you here?" demanded Moll.

The woman turned with a low sob, relieved from sudden terror of the policeman by the sight of Moll's calash and cloak.

"I cannot help it. I never came before into the street, indeed, indeed I never did. But my child is starving. It drove me mad enough for anything to hear her crying for food."

"There are houses enough where children are fed and clothed and brought up in a Christian manner."

"Oh, you are one of that kind, are you?" answered the woman, with a fierce glare in her sunken eyes. "How would you like to have your child, all you have got in this miserable world to keep you from cursing, taken away from you, and made to work and be beaten, and half starved, without a bit of love? She is hungry enough now, but she has somebody to love her. Go off. I tell you I have tried it, and they would not take her unless I agreed to keep away from her. There is but one place for us. We can go and leap into the water. I think we shall not be hungry there!"

A low, bitter laugh gurgled hoarsely between the thin blue lips.

"Heaven help you, poor wretch!" ejaculated Moll, feeling in her pocket with tremulous hands.

A look of almost delicious joy flashed into the hollow eyes as she saw the movement.

"You will give me something? Oh, good woman, good woman! If there is a Great Ruler up above who sees all this, He will surely reward you!"

Moll brought out a coin, and thrust it into the outstretched, shaking fingers.

The woman held it eagerly to the light.

"Gold! gold!" cried she. "I think there are indeed angels who come down to help us, and you are one. Now little Molly shall have bread!"

She was rushing away, but suddenly paused.

"They will not believe me. If I have gold, they will say I stole it. Oh, give me silver instead."

The pitying Moll drew out her hand filled with shining coin, and held it under the light to search for silver.

"What! gold! all gold?" cried the half-crazed creature. "Who would believe you could be so rich?"

"Keep the gold piece. Here is silver besides. Get your child bread, and try to live a virtuous life," said Old Moll, in a shaking voice.

The woman snatched the money eagerly, and went flying towards a baker's shop on the opposite side of the street.

Moll walked on, murmuring, "It was not in vain that I came out to-night. At least I shall sleep sweeter for remembering this."

But there had been other observers of this little scene. Among the crowd pouring out from the gambling-house came two sailors, stout, broad-chested men, their gait evidently made still more swaggering by the liquor they had taken.

While the others crossed directly to the opposite side these two waited on the steps of the doorway for a few parting words.

One of them grasped the other's arm, and silently drew his attention to the strange pair beneath the lamp—the miserable mendicant and the singular housefactor. Even there the light shone temptingly upon the round gold coins heaped up in the open palm of Moll.

Moll went on slowly, and these two men followed at a respectful distance.

"Shiver my timbers, Bill, that's a queer craft to carry such freight. If she answers signals from such sails as these, mayhap she wouldn't mind shelling out to us, too. This cursed luck to-night has just cleaned me out; not a shot in the locker. I say, Bill."

"Pipe away, Jack; let's know where you're steering."

"That ere gold will put us on our feet agin, Bill. We needn't think of shipping for another month. The old lady won't feel very bad to lose it, if she shovels it out in such fashion. Let's overhaul her, Bill."

"And hang out signals of distress? What a lubber you be, Jack Martin. She'll tell you to go to work with them big arms of yours."

"A little piracy ain't so bad, Bill, when it is a case of distress like ours. Let's make believe we're men-of-war, and order her to heave to. Gold is out of her luv. She don't show colours for it. If we find it, we can confiscate it."

This last was uttered in a persuasive whisper, with an elbow nudge by way of emphasis.

But his companion was evidently in a surly humour, occasioned doubtlessly by the evening's losses at the gaming-table.

"If you want a policeman to clap the darbies on your wrists, you can go in for it, Jack Martin."

"Pooh! Can't the pair of us do it neat enough to save a crowd? Avast there, Bill! Don't be such a spooney. It lulls; she's tacked. By thunder, Bill! she's down for the wharf. Just the thing for us."

Bill's dull eyes brightened.

"That ere's a fact," said he, slowly; "we couldn't ask smoother sailing. Besides, if she's found in the water in the morning, there'll only be the coroner to say the case's accidental drowning. There'll be no tale-telling then. I'm your man now, Jack."

"Come on, then, my hearty. Keep in the shade of the roofing, and stand ready to clap your hands over her mouth. It serves her right. What business has she down here at this time of night?"

The two desperadoes crept on stealthily, and before them, with crossed arms, bowed head, and loitering footsteps, walked the unconscious Moll.

The escape from the crowded streets had relieved her, evidently.

She pushed back her huge calash, and allowed the breeze to play refreshingly over her face.

She almost appeared to have gained in vigour and strength, for her shoulders straightened and broadened, her very breath seemed drawn with longer, deeper inspiration.

The wharf certainly could not have been unfamiliar to her, for she turned noiselessly from the station of the policeman and the night-watchman, and carefully threaded her way among bales, boxes, and barrels, to the very edge of the plank walk, where she might well believe herself safe from observation.

Here she stood motionless, with bared head, looking up into the sky.

Just then the slender crescent of silver sailed out into a clear space of blue.

The mild light these little gleams of rippling silver gave to the sluggish water brought out in full relief the tall buildings in the rear with their numberless windows, like so many Argus eyes of greedy trade, revealing the tapering masts and graceful spars of the vessels beyond huddling up to the wharfs like a flock of weary birds, and shone tenderly and softly over the strange woman's uncanny figure.

"It's beautiful!" ejaculated Old Moll, softly. "I knew I should be comforted and calmed if I came here."

She crossed her arms over her fluttering cloak, and allowed the rising breeze to sway her to and fro, even on the edge of the wharf, below whose massive piles drifted the black, sullen water.

Thus, all unconscious of her danger, she stood lost in her dreamy reverie, while behind her, slowly and stealthily, crept on the reckless desperadoes.

Faithful Tim was sound asleep in his narrow bed, all undreaming of this terrible need of his stout arm. Genevieve was sitting at her chamber window, likewise looking up into the sky with thoughtful eyes, planning how to warn her faithful old friend of Mrs. Merton's animosity, but never once suspecting how fearful a doom at that very instant manaced the kind-hearted old woman.

Moll neither stirred nor resisted when a sudden, fierce grip came upon her arm, although her heart leaped to her throat with one wild bound.

The man seized her by the throat, and stifled with his rough hand whatever outcry she might have made.

"Quick, shipmate; empty out the pockets," whispered he, hoarsely.

Ruthless fingers obeyed promptly. The coin was speedily transferred to a leather bag which Bill produced from his own pockets.

"Aye, aye!" said Bill, in response, "in with her now; she's well fished."

But hardened as he was, the other villain hesitated.

"She's scared me to death—there's no harm to come of her. We've got the shippers. Let her off, I say."

"And I say no," returned the other, doggedly. "I've known too much trouble come of soft-heartedness. She'd start an alarm in no time. In with her, and that's the end of it."

Seeing the hopelessness of remonstrance, the other villain prepared to obey.

Moll rose up to the sky with one last piteous appeal.

"Ere that cloak round her mouth to stop screeches, and be quick about it."

And the grip upon her arm was more fierce than before.

Just then the thin, vapoury cloud sailed away from the moon, and it shone out unobscured again. The man stooping down to execute his threat, brought his face in full view of hers, for his cap had fallen off. His comrade had thoughtlessly loosened his hand across her mouth.

With the first effort she had made Moll suddenly pushed it off, and in a clear, ringing voice, exclaimed:

"Jack Martin! William Bates! is this business for honest sailors? Away with you, both of you."

"Heaven have mercy!" ejaculated Jack Martin, falling back in terror.

"Oh, heaven!" muttered Bill Bates, dropping the bag of coin. "That voice, Jack—do you know it?"

"Tar blow me if I don't think we've run afoul of a ghost, Jack!"

Old Moll took advantage of their panic. She thrust her hand into her bosom, and brought it forth well defended by a tiny tube which glittered in the moon-light.

With one hand she threw back her calash and faced them, while the other clutched the weapon firmly, and that clear, ringing voice, which was not the voice of Old Moll, said:

"Away with you, villains. You disgrace your calling. Away with you, before I call for help by firing this pistol!"

It was not so much the pistol as the voice which sent the two men tumbling and hurrying, helter-skelter, over the barrels and bales, until they gained safety and a side street.

Replacing the little weapon which the sudden attack had rendered useless at the commencement of the affair, Moll readjusted her calash, picked up the bag of coin, and went speedily homeward, murmuring:

"It was the narrowest escape I have had yet! It behoves me to keep close at home after this."

CHAPTER X.

THE Honourable Richard Merton had left Merton House that morning with slightly disturbed spirits. His lady wife and himself had come as near to a matrimonial quarrel as it was possible for such high-bred people. It commenced in their dressing-room.

"My dear," the lady had said, with one of her blindest smiles, "don't you think it would be a good idea to send down workmen to Thurston Cottage?"

"For what, pray?" answered the Honourable Richard, testily, for somehow that very name of late brought a sting. Was it that he could not bear the thought of Allick Thurston's solemn charge, written on that last evening of his life?

"Why, for settling it, to be sure," returned his wife, the thin lips settling down into a quiet determination, which he had learned to dread. "A great many people will leave town next week, but Philip's accident and sickness here will be a good excuse for our delay. I think they might get the place ready in three weeks at the longest."

"Get it ready for what, Annabel? I don't understand you."

And the gentleman turned to the mirror and began anxiously brushing his well-arranged whiskers.

"I am sure I don't see anything very mystical about the words. You have had a fine country-seat left you. Don't you intend to take advantage of it?"

"I had a country-seat before. What do you require better than the Cote?"

"That tiresome place! We have been there every summer for a dozen years. It is not half so large either as the Thurston estate."

"I beg your pardon. The mansion-house at the Cote is nearly twice the size of Thurston Cottage."

"Of the cottage, possibly, but you know the grounds and outlands are really magnificent. The notice in the *Gazette* speaks especially of them. The workmen can soon put up a couple of wings. I sent Thompson for the plan of the place at the architect's; it will be singularly easy to arrange additions."

"I dare say, but there will be no additions made this summer," was the dry rejoinder.

"I hope you are not in one of your economical fits, just now, when I have set my heart, for dear Annabel's sake, upon making a little sensation in the world. As dear Lady Graeme was saying yesterday, I have contented myself with exemplary patience under a state of things entirely beneath my rank. This fortunate legacy will allow me to maintain the style suitable to the daughter of a baronet. I proposed inviting a select party to spend the summer with us. Just imagine how it will sound in the *Morning Post*!"

"We learn that the Honourable Richard Merton has invited a fashionable and select circle to enjoy his hospitality at the noble estate recently come into his possession. The house is situated near a romantic and charming sheet of water, and the fortunate guests will be sure of a halcyon summer. The Cote, the honourable gentleman's usual summer resort, is closed, &c."

"Lady Graeme says Brown, the reporter, will write the notice, and see that it is in. Just think of the advantage it will be to Annabel and Philip. For my part, I feel it will be the first step towards getting a title for Philip. With his splendid fortune he ought to be able to get one."

The lady had talked herself into good humour again.

Glancing up into her husband's face, she saw there a look of horror which startled her.

"Why, Richard, what ails you?"

"Nothing particular," replied he, turning around hastily, so that she could see his countenance. "I think I have only heard one word of your interesting newspaper paragraph. That it was situated near a charming sheet of water. Do you happen to remember that Captain Alick was drowned in that lake? It will be suggestive of very calvealing reminiscences to your fashionable friends."

The tone was intensely bitter, only slightly covered by the sneer. What ghastly figure he strove to put away from his vision she could not guess.

"Well, to be sure, I had forgotten that. But I don't believe anyone else will remember it. But, Richard, I wish you would give the orders at once. I sent to Vesey to know if he was at leisure, and he can attend to the upholstery."

"If you have given orders you can countermand them. Thurston Cottage will not be touched this summer. It is expressly provided in the will that the place shall not be disturbed for six months."

"How tiresome! What could have induced him to hamper you with so unreasonable a charge?" returned the lady, peevishly.

"He did not know but he might die shortly, and he wished to give his servants a comfortable home while they were looking out for another. He was a peculiar man; he had more regard for his servants than most people."

The lady was too busy with her mental planning to heed the sarcasm.

"After all, we can go just the same. What there is of the house must be in good repair, and well furnished. I remember Captain Alick had the duke as a guest a little time ago. We must issue fewer invitations. It will be all the merrier for the young folks."

"You will go alone, Annabel, in that case. I shall spend my summer at the Cote, or else make a tour somewhere. I need rest; I am getting nervous with overwork."

"What perverse spirit has taken possession of you, Richard? Why can't you go to Thurston Cottage?"

A slow shudder crept over him. His eyes were covering beneath their lashes, his lips were blue, as he answered, in a tone which showed how the words were unwillingly forced from him:

"Because I could not endure the memories of the place; because I should go mad."

She looked startled, and answered, musingly:

"I was not aware that you thought so much about that old man. You have not indeed been the same since his death. Then I suppose I must give it up. You must reward us for our acquiescence, then. My

jewels must be reset, and have a few additions. And Annabel must have that diamond and amethyst set for which she is longing."

"It is too costly and too magnificent for her. I wonder you do not see it. It is suitable for a duchess or princess; any lower rank would be debased instead of exalted by attempting to wear it. I went to look at it, after she coaxed me so long about it. I don't know where I could raise so many guineas as they ask for it."

"There is Captain Alick's prize-money. It would buy half a dozen such."

The Honourable Richard threw down the hairbrush, violently, and dashed out of the room. In a moment the street door closed behind him with a vindictive bang.

"Good heavens! am I to be always tormented in this way?" muttered he, as he strode out of the room. "Is there never to be a moment's peace without an allusion to that property, which already hangs like a millstone around my neck?"

He walked on at a swift pace, deeply lost in a gloomy reverie.

Suddenly from behind him came a sweet, clear voice.

"Miriam, Miriam!" it called.

The dark-browed Member of Parliament started as if a cannon had been fired at his ear, and he turned around, looking wildly in every direction.

In a moment he uttered a contemptuous "Pshaw!" but his hand still shook, and his cheek was ghastly pale.

A bevy of merry, bright-cheeked school-girls were tripping along to their school, and they were calling to a pretty little damsel on the other side.

"This will never do," said the Honourable Richard, resolutely, while he wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. "I shall be crazed in a month if I go on at this rate. I must get away from all these disturbing scenes. I must have rest and quiet until my mind returns to its usual tone. Then I shall be able to laugh at this nervousness. I will take a journey to Scotland."

Very much relieved by this decision, the gentleman passed the rest of the morning in less perturbed spirits.

He lunched at his club, where he met a dozen of his own political party, and enjoyed a spirited debate on the questions of the day.

The quiet deference to his opinion, the universal air of respect and esteem from these worthy gentlemen, restored still farther his ease of mind.

By the time he was ready to go home to dinner he was in a remarkably cheerful state.

He remembered his angry exit with compunction, and as a sort of peace-offering dropped in at the jeweller's, selected a handsome brooch for his wife, and as very elegant although less magnificent set of jewels than those she had desired for Annabel.

With these cases in his hand, and the most cheerful face he had worn for a long while, Richard Merton entered his home and proceeded at once to the favourite parlour.

He stood transfixed with amazement on the threshold. It was indeed a singular scene which met his eye.

In the centre of the room stood the weird, strange figure of old Moll, her arms folded across her chest, her green calash drawn still more closely over her face, her long white hair streaming wildly over her bright plaid cloak.

On either side was stationed a stout policeman, and before her, her sweet face agitated with contending emotions of pity, indignation, and distress, stood Genevieve; while still farther from him were grouped Mrs. Merton, vindictive and triumphant, Annabel, carelessly curious, and Philip Leigh doing his best to refrain from interference until the proper time.

The moment she caught sight of Richard Merton Genevieve sprang forward and seized his hand.

"Oh, sir, I am so thankful to see you. Please explain to Mrs. Merton her mistake. She accuses poor Old Moll of being a thief and a vagrant. Tell her what you knew about her at Thurston Cottage. How many can come from there to testify to her harmless character. Don't let them take her to that dreadful prison, I implore you."

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Mr. Richard, his brow darkening once more.

"It means," replied his wife in her haughtiest tone, "that I am resolved to rid Merton House of the prowling visits of this vagabond creature. The house-keeper has complained again and again of the mysterious disappearance of forks, spoons, table-linen, and the like. I am convinced that we have discovered the thief. This vile old thing is hanging about the place morning, noon, and night. Why is she here, unless to steal, like the rest of her class?"

"She comes to see me. I have told you that before!" exclaimed Genevieve, her voice trembling.

"A fine pretence! I forbade you to receive her. I

appeal to all here to know what they would think of a member of this family, any member, however humble or obnoxious, choosing such an associate. I dare say she came to see you, and to steal likewise."

"Hush, Annabel!" said Mr. Merton, and while he tried to catch the expression of the swarthy face beneath the green calash without success, he turned to one of the policemen, and asked, "What do you think? Does the evidence against the woman warrant a search?"

"It's rather a suspicious case, sir. We've had our eye on her for some time. The lady is right. She is always hanging about this place, but we haven't been able to catch her yet at any tricks. What have you to say for yourself, woman? Why don't you speak?"

And the policeman laid hold of Old Moll's arm, and shook it by no means very gently.

"Evil be to them that evil think," answered Old Moll's deep voice. "If you can prove anything against me, take me to prison. If you can find no farther harm in an old woman than hanging about a place to catch now and then a glimpse of her mistress's sweet face, let her go in peace. Any way, the will of heaven will be done."

But her downcast eyes were bent anxiously to the floor, as if searching for some way of extrication from her dilemma.

Old Moll had good reason for wishing to avoid the search.

There was the purse well filled with golden coin in the faded old linsey dress pocket.

It was honestly hers, but it would go far to prejudice the police against her.

She was keen-witted enough to see that.

"Why does she care so much about you?" asked Mr. Richard, coming to Genevieve's side.

"I don't know, precisely. She knew my mother, and she was very fond of Captain Alick. He told me, the very last night of his life, that I was to trust her, that she was one of my best friends, and knew a great deal about me, more than I suspected."

Innocent Genevieve! she could not have used more luckless words in pleading for her poor old friend.

Richard Merton's lips suddenly whitened, the scared, wild look came back to his eyes.

He turned to the policeman, devoutly hoping that proof enough to imprison the strange woman would be speedily produced.

"I agree with you. It is a very suspicious case. Take her away. I will come round to the station by-and-by to learn the result."

Genevieve uttered a sorrowful exclamation.

Mrs. Merton smiled triumphantly.

At that moment a servant came in with a card for his master.

"A gentleman appears very anxious to see you, sir."

Richard Merton unconsciously read the name aloud as he took the card; upon it was written, "The Rev. Mr. Pomfret, from Melbourne."

At the same instant the door was pushed open. The eager visitor had followed behind the servant.

"I beg your pardon, but it occurred to me that you might not recall that name," said a consequential, brisk little man as he hurried up to Mr. Merton. "How do you do, sir? Ah, I thought you wouldn't know. Pomfret's the name I took, sir. I'm Maclean—the man you sent to that situation in Melbourne! I'm sure I'm grateful enough, sir. It's been the making of me."

"I'll see you in the library. I'll come there directly," stammered Mr. Richard, the cold sweat starting out from his forehead.

"Oh, yes, sir; yes, sir; I knew you would be glad to know how well I've got along. I'm just going to see how old Scotland looks. I haven't been home all these years," said he, as he was leaving the room.

The Honourable Richard, however, in fact, fairly pushed him out, and to stop his incessant chattering followed, and closed the door behind him.

The ears beneath the green calash had not been inattentive. Old Moll suddenly wheeled around, and faced Mrs. Merton.

"The Lord maketh the ways of the wicked to turn to His praise, madam. Old Moll thanks you! You have done her the best service she could have asked of you. Policemen, lead on; I'm ready."

And as she passed the distressed and agitated Genevieve, she lifted up her wrinkled, swarthy hands in blessing.

(To be continued.)

At Eton College the "game at the wall" was played, as is usual, on St. Andrew's Day. As usual, the game lasted from 12.30 to 1.30, and resulted in a tie. The Oppidians had the best of it during the well-contested game. The umpires were, Mr. R. H. Mitchell for Oppidians, and the Rev. D. N. Yonge for Collegers. There were present amongst the company assembled

—Dr. Balston, the head master; Viscount Kirkcaldie, Lord Edward Chichester, Col. Baillie, and a number of the officers of the Windsor garrison, many of the college masters, Mr. Norton, Mr. Moore, Mr. Palmer-Morewood, &c. The college eleven consisted of Messrs. G. Smith, Goldie, Armitstead, Foley (capt.), Huddleston, Tuck, Lock, Freeth, Wight, Tindal, and Maud; and the Oppidans—Messrs. Horner, Bonsor, Entwistle, Calvert, mi. Bunbury, Benson (capt.), Sturgis, Russell, Parry, Unthank, and Thompson.

THE BORROWED DIAMONDS.

"I SAY, JACKSON, I wonder how Graham manages to dress his wife so well—he is only a book-keeper?"

"Just what I was thinking about. He is our book-keeper, so I know what his salary is; and I can't imagine how he pays his board and keeps up such an appearance such times as these. His wife must have some means of her own."

"Not at all. She was a poor girl, earning her own living when Graham married her."

"Well, my salary is the same as his, and if I thought I could dress a wife half as well as he dresses his, I would marry to-morrow. I shall ask him how he manages."

This conversation occurred between the friends Jackson and Anderson while walking one Sunday afternoon, after meeting Graham and his pretty young wife.

Mrs. Graham's dress certainly was rich enough to excite the attention of her husband's fellow clerks. The heavy crimson silk dress, black corded silk mantle, and white tulle bonnet trimmed with real blonde, with crimson roses inside and strings of the same colour, besides her parasol, gloves, and lace handkerchief, were indeed too costly to suit the book-keeper's salary had he been obliged to pay for them; but the various articles which made up this handsome costume were birthday presents from relatives of Mr. Graham.

These relatives took a lively interest in the young couple, and knowing that Mr. Graham's income was insufficient to dress his wife as well as other members of the society in which he moved, they made up the deficiency by timely presents.

These relatives had not been very well pleased when Mr. Graham married Miss Smith.

She earned her own living, and belonged to a family beneath the Gabriels in the social scale, but they were too proud to exhibit their disappointment to the world, and withal too fond of their handsome kinsman to quarrel with him, so they determined to make the best of it, and in time Nellie's prettiness and attractiveness won their hearts, and they became really attached to her for her own sake.

Nellie had good principles and a fair education, but she was vain, fond of dress and company, and the hesitation she at first felt about accepting the means to gratify her vanity from her husband's relatives soon wore away.

Neither husband nor wife would have been pleased had their fashionable friends known the truth; and so, when Jackson asked his friend Graham the next day how he managed to do so much with his income, Graham said, "Oh, we don't fritter our money away as some people do;" but did not give the slightest intimation that his wife's expensive clothes did not come out of his salary.

Not very long afterwards a ball came off, and as Graham received a ticket, of course Mrs. Graham wanted to look her best, and exceedingly pretty she did look in a pink silk dress with a tulle overskirt.

Mr. Hatry, the head of the firm in which Graham was book-keeper, was there with his wife and daughter, and what would have escaped his notice did not escape theirs.

Mrs. Graham, the wife of his book-keeper, wore diamonds! Now, Mr. Hatry, successful merchant that he was, had never considered himself rich enough to buy diamonds for his wife, therefore his astonishment was great at first; but on reflection he concluded they were only paste, and said so to his wife and daughter. But Miss Hatry persisted that they were real. She knew by the way they sparkled.

Anderson was also at the ball, and of course noticed the diamonds, but, like Mr. Hatry, supposed they were paste.

On their way home from the ball the principal subject of conversation between Mrs. and Miss Hatry was the extravagance of Mrs. Graham. Their remarks so far influenced Mr. Hatry that he determined to examine his affairs closely and see that all was right. The result was a discovery of fraud to the amount of several thousand pounds.

Mr. Hatry went home, feeling very uncomfortable indeed at the thought of Graham being dishonest, for of course his suspicions fell upon him at once, owing to what he had heard about Mrs. Graham's extravagance, otherwise his book-keeper was the last

person in his employment whom he would have suspected.

The same evening Mr. and Mrs. Graham were going out again, although it was but a few nights after the ball.

This time she wore a yellow silk skirt and a black velvet bodice, with various flowers and feathers, the costume being intended to represent a Spanish lady.

Nellie was giving the finishing touch to her toilet when someone knocked at the door, and on opening it Mr. Hatry walked in.

Great was the surprise of the Gabriels, and great also was the confirmation given to Mr. Hatry's suspicions.

He had intended to be very gentle and considerate, and endeavour to lead the wanderer back with cords of love, but the sight of this fanciful costume made him indignant, and he spoke with some severity.

"I suppose, Mr. Graham, you are aware of my reason for calling on you this evening?"

Graham looked his surprise as he answered:

"Indeed I am not."

"That is strange; I felt sure your conscience would have told you my errand."

"Mr. Hatry, what do you mean? I cannot imagine anything to cause you to come to my house and speak in such a strange manner."

"Well, as you cannot imagine, I suppose I had better tell you. I find that I have been robbed of three thousand pounds, and I thought that you might help me to discover the thief."

While speaking Mr. Hatry fixed his eyes steadily on Graham, who, although becoming somewhat agitated, returned his gaze boldly as he replied:

"Your manner would imply that you thought I had something to do with it; is it so?"

"I will be plain with you: suspicion has fallen upon you. But, believe me, Graham, I would give double the amount in question to be convinced of your innocence."

"Will you tell me your grounds for supposing me a thief?" said Graham, proudly.

"Your wife's extravagance in dress. Excuse me if I pain you; you know I believe in coming to the point at once. A few nights ago it is said that your wife wore diamonds, and her dress on that occasion, and on others, was more expensive than you could honestly afford to buy; but perhaps my first thought was the right one—that the diamonds were only paste, and her dress not so expensive as it appeared. I will not disguise from you that your wife's appearance to-night did much to confirm these suspicions. If you can explain all this I shall be delighted to look elsewhere for the guilty one."

"Excuse me, Mr. Hatry, but there is no man living who has a right to ask for an explanation of my domestic affairs; as your book-keeper I have tried to do my duty; and can only assure you that I never touched your money, neither will I remain where my honesty is suspected."

"Well, Graham, I do wish you would explain. You do not know how it troubles me to think evil of you."

However, Graham would not explain, and Mr. Hatry went away, feeling sad and uncertain.

Graham and his wife went to the party, feeling very indignant indeed, but put a brave face on the matter, and seemed as gay as ever, especially as Jackson was one of the guests.

A few weeks passed away, and Graham and his wife began to think their prospects not very cheering. They were going in debt, and being unable to get employment, his pride received a shock, and he saw that he had been hasty in giving up a good situation.

Meanwhile, the clerks were surprised at his absence. Mr. Hatry was careful to say nothing against Graham; but as the knowledge of the robbery could not be concealed, they were not slow in concluding that Graham was the delinquent, but that their employer refrained from prosecuting on account of the friendship existing between them.

Just at this time one of the clerks received a summons to attend the death-bed of his mother, who lived in the country. The young man went away, seemingly in great distress.

The suspicions against Graham spread till they reached the ears of his relatives, who came at once to his wife to know what they meant. She told them what had happened, and wept bitterly as she fully realized the trouble caused by her foolish vanity.

Yes, her fondness for dress and pleasure had brought ruin on her husband; and in the midst of her tears her resolution was taken to explain all and clear his character.

Waiting only the departure of her visitors, she dressed herself hastily, and throwing a veil over her face, went to Mr. Hatry's house. Knowing that Mr. Hatry was probably at his business, she asked for Mrs. Hatry, who came down.

A sensible woman herself, Mrs. Hatry was astonished at the vanity which led Mrs. Graham to dress in borrowed finery, but she was good and kind, and pitied her, while admiring the moral courage of such a confession. She gave her some kind advice, and promised to tell Mr. Hatry the whole story.

Nellie went home with a lighter heart and a consciousness of having done right, which feeling was strengthened when, soon after her own return, her husband came in, pale and tired, and without a word of greeting sank on a chair, covering his face with his hands. Several of his friends had passed him in the street with a cold bow and a look of contempt.

"Nellie, we have been very foolish; the only thing before us is to leave the country; looking for employment here is useless—my character is ruined."

"Oh! no, I hope not. Mr. Hatry will know everything to-night."

"How so? I will never humiliate myself to give him an explanation. He should have known me too well to suspect me. No, we must leave England."

"I have already explained everything to Mrs. Hatry. When your aunt and your cousin came to ask me what people meant by saying you had robbed your employer, I could bear it no longer. To think your good name should be lost through my folly! But I should be adding sin to sin if my pride were to prevent me from acknowledging my errors. We forgot to avoid even the appearance of evil. I felt a secret satisfaction in making people wonder how I could buy so many dresses. Hour after hour I have spent in altering Aunt Graham's old ball-dresses to make them look new. And those unlucky diamonds! Aunt did not wish to lend them to me at first, she was afraid I might lose them, but I promised to be careful of them; and I was so proud at the idea of wearing real diamonds. No, I do not wonder at Mr. Hatry's suspicions, and I am sure he wished to act kindly by you when he came that night. If we had only explained then!"

"Yes, it would have been better; but it is too late now. Perhaps Mr. Hatry will not believe your explanation, and even if he do, he will not come here again. I suppose suspicion falling on me has enabled the real defrauder to escape. Yes, Nellie, we have been very, very foolish. I felt proud of seeing you well dressed, and disregarded the fact that we were exciting the curiosity, envy and ill-will of my fellow clerks. Even when Jackson asked me how I did so much with my income my reply was equivalent to a lie. If we had lived more for ourselves and less for society we should have been spared this mortification."

Some time after, when Graham and his wife were discussing plans for leaving the country and finding employment elsewhere, Mr. Hatry came in.

"Graham, my friend, I could not rest without seeing you. Why did you not tell me what Mrs. Graham told my wife to-day? Mrs. Graham, I honour you; you have remembered the maxim, 'Before honour is humility.' Graham, do you forgive me? If you do shake hands."

"Willingly; I see now that under the circumstances you could hardly have thought otherwise. I hope you will forgive me for not taking your intended kindness in a better spirit."

"Certainly; I feel so happy in the thought of your innocence that I almost forget the unpleasantness of our last interview. Where are you employed now?"

"I have not been able to get a situation. I intend leaving England to-morrow."

"Nonsense! your old situation is waiting for you. It will be the best refutation of the evil reports in circulation about you."

Graham did not like to go back, disliking to explain to the other clerks, but Mr. Hatry said he need give no explanation, only attend to his duties, and in time it would die away.

It was a hard ordeal, but Graham submitted, and in a few days was rewarded by having his innocence fully established.

The young clerk who had been summoned away did not return, neither did any message arrive from him.

While talking about him one day someone remembered that he had before said that his mother died when he was a boy.

This first turned Mr. Hatry's suspicions towards the absent clerk; he caused inquiries to be made, and learned that the young man had lived a very extravagant and dissipated life for a year or so. He had been fully trusted, and often went to the bank to take deposits.

On comparing the account of the money with the account of the money received by the bank, a difference of three thousand pounds was discovered. On it being brought to their minds, several remembered that on those days when the money was taken the absent clerk was sent to the bank.

Fearful of proving Graham guilty, Mr. Hatry had not investigated the matter well, else he would have discovered the real offender before. A. J. C.

CINCHONAS IN INDIA.—There are now growing nearly one million cinchona trees on the Neilgherry Hills in India, some of which have reached the height of 17 feet. It was but a very few years since the first cinchona trees were transplanted from Peru to India. These trees produce the famous Jesuits or Peruvian bark, from which the medicinal specific for the cure of fever is derived.

THE DUC DE BLACAS, whose splendid collection has just been purchased for the British Museum, had, it appears, offered it to the French Government at a lower price, but its offer was not accepted until it was too late. There is consequently great indignation in artistic circles in Paris at the laches of the Imperial authorities. The gems of the collection, consisting of a bronze statuette of Ajax and two Roman coins with portraits of Mark Antony and his son, are, however, still in the duke's possession, and will, it is said, be presented by him to the Louvre.

A TALE OF VERSAILLES.—One day M. Cerfber went to the Palace of Versailles to entreat Louis XIV. in favour of the Israelites. He found the hall so full of courtiers that he was compelled to tarry a long time before he could be admitted. The day had far advanced, and M. Cerfber, seeing that his turn had not yet arrived, placed himself to repeat the prayer of Mincha, which it is incumbent on Israelites to do before dusk. This religious man retired to a corner of the hall, and while saying his prayer, with profound devotion, the usher of the chamber announced that the king was ready to receive him. Without, however, hurrying himself on hearing the calls of the chamberlain, who repeated that the king waited for him, M. Cerfber devoutly finished his prayer, and when admitted to the king he said, "Sire, there is only one monarch greater than your majesty. It is God, and it was before Him I was detained." The king, who was acquainted with the piety of M. Cerfber, and that to a profound patriotism he joined great elevation of mind, graciously approved his excuse, and granted his petition in behalf of the Israelites of Alsace.—*Moral and Religious Tales.*

"SLEEP UPON IT."

"MR. CLINTON MOORE will hear from me before this sun goes down!"

John Bosworth was very pale, his hands were clenched, and his lips trembled as they could only tremble when he was fairly mad with passion.

"I have been a good friend to Clinton Moore," he continued, "but he shall find that I am not to be despised."

"Did he speak so very hard of you?" asked Mrs. Bosworth.

"I'll tell you what he said of me," answered the husband, with a gasp. "He said I was a liar. He said I had defrauded him. He said I had proved myself unworthy of the confidence of all honourable men."

"Did he say this?"

"Yes. I know he said it. One of my friends heard him, and brought his words to me. But he will rue the hour."

"I am surprised that Mr. Moore should have said that of you," remarked Mrs. Bosworth. "He may have lost a little something by the failure of the company, but he certainly cannot blame you."

"Of course no one can blame me. But never mind. I have a hold upon Clinton Moore, and he shall smart for this. He must have been crazy when he spoke thus. He must have forgotten that I held an execution against him."

And at this point Mr. Bosworth strode up and down the room, rubbing his hands in an excited manner.

"Aye," he continued, with vindictive emphasis, "I hold the very roof that covers him in my hands, and before this day's sun goes down the sheriff shall pay him a visit. Aha! he little dreams what is in store for him. By the heavens above me, Clinton Moore and his family shall be houseless and homeless to-morrow."

The circumstances under which all this feeling had been raised were as follows: A mining company had been formed, and John Bosworth had acted as agent for the town in which he lived. He, with others, believed that it was a good thing, and he sold considerable stock, and, among others, Clinton Moore bought some of it.

But the concern had proved a failure, and the money which Bosworth had paid over to the company was a total loss.

But this was not all that some of the sufferers had to complain against the agent.

A few men had paid for stock only a short time previous to the failure, and when Bosworth held money in his hands thus paid he refunded it. In this

he did what he thought was right, but those whose money had been paid over to the treasurer of the company asserted that he had shown partiality. In the first moment of their disappointment they were not inclined to listen to reason. He simply said to Mr. Moore:

"You bought stock, and paid me your money, and that money I turned over to the company, and it was used in prosecuting the works. I cannot pay it back to you. But Mr. Graves paid me one hundred pounds for stock, and before his money had passed into the hands of the company I learned of the failure. Fortunately, I was in time to help him, and I did so. The money was not mine, for I was but an agent. Mr. Graves had entrusted it to me for the mining company. While I held that money the company ceased to exist. It might have been legal for me to have passed the funds over as assets of the company, and had I supposed there could have been any division among the stockholders I would have done so; but knowing that every pound thus turned over would only be swallowed up in a common wreck, I chose to act the part of a friend and save what I could. I wish I could have saved for you all, but you know I could not."

Clinton Moore had been one of the first to subscribe for stock, and he borrowed money for that purpose, and he was one of those who had been loudest in denouncing everything in connection with the company. He was impulsive and spoke without thinking, as men do who speak when they are in a passion. He was thoughtless enough to forget that John Bosworth had been a truly valuable and kind-hearted friend.

A few years before Clinton Moore had been unfortunate in business, and a creditor had obtained an execution against him for something over a thousand pounds.

That execution had passed into the hands of a firm of which Bosworth was a member.

They had obtained it in a settlement for less than a third of its ostensible value, and they meant that the debtor should not only have his own time for payment, but that he should only be called on to pay enough to make them no losers.

With this understanding Moore hoped that in a few years he should be able to make it right.

Should that execution be brought down upon him now it would ruin him.

This was what he had forgotten when he allowed himself to speak so harshly and unjustly of John Bosworth.

John Bosworth was one of the best and warmest-hearted men in his town, and no man depended more upon the comforts of social life than he did; but he was an impulsive man, easily moved to tears, and easily moved to indignation. It had been entirely through his instrumentality that the execution had been suspended, and he had planned, in the goodness of his heart, that the wife and children of the debtor should never suffer at the hands of the sheriff, even if the debt were never paid.

Mrs. Bosworth did not offer her husband any advice. She was deeply pained by what she had heard, and she thought Moore should be punished. She only saw what her husband suffered, and for the time, with a wife's sympathy, she entered into the spirit of his feelings. In fact, the little woman declared that she would punish Clinton Moore if she could. She would perform wonders of vengeance. She would let folks know that she was not to be trodden upon. And yet those who knew her well knew that she could not even have harmed a mouse. The villain was never so black that could not have awakened her sympathy by a well-told story of sorrow.

"It was very unjust of Clinton Moore to speak so," she said. "That's because you've helped him so much."

"Never mind," muttered John. "He shall hear from me. That execution goes into the hands of the sheriff this afternoon."

And with these words John Bosworth left the house, and as he strode down the street he looked as his friends had never seen him look before. He was pale and agitated—just in the mood for dread and direful work. Had all the friends he possessed on earth appeared at that moment and asked him, with united voices, to forego his vengeance, he would have laughed them to scorn. There was a devil in him—anxious and impatient—tearing his heart and distorting his features, else he could not have looked as he did, and the thought of harming a fellow creature could not have held place in his bosom.

"Hullo, Bosworth! is this you?"

John Bosworth stopped and regarded his friend.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Yes, Appleton."

"Ha! By the way, Isaac, you were present when Clinton Moore denounced me so severely last evening?"

"I heard what he said about you."

"What was it? I think I have not been misinformed."

"There is no danger of your having been misinformed, John, for he spoke about as severely as it was possible for a man to speak. He was angry, and he knew not what he said."

Isaac Appleton was a calm, kind, considerate man, and had much influence over his friends for good, and when he saw Bosworth's face he knew that the demon of vengeance possessed him.

"It makes little odds what he knew," cried John. "I happen to know what he said, and he shall suffer for it."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Never mind."

"Surely, John, you would not lay violent hands upon him?"

"No; that would degrade me. I have a surer method of punishment. I hold an execution against him?"

Appleton understood, and as his friend would have passed on he detained him.

"John, will you listen to me one moment?"

"What for?"

"Will you listen?"

"Say on."

"I speak for your good."

"Bah!"

"Seriously, John, will you listen?"

"Not to any plea for Clinton Moore."

"I shall make none. If I make a simple request, the granting of which I most solemnly promise will result to your benefit, will you grant it?"

"I must know first what it is."

"John Bosworth, I think you can trust me."

"Has your request anything to do with Clinton Moore?"

"Not directly."

"Do you intend to ask me to abate one particle of my vengeance?"

"No; I do not intend to ask you to spare him at all."

"Then out with it, if it be anything in reason I will grant it."

"Then grant me this, John: Before you take another step in this matter go home and sleep upon it."

"What?"

"Go home and sleep upon it."

"Isaac!"

"John Bosworth, I am in earnest. Go home and sleep upon it. Will you do this to please me?"

"It will make no difference. It will only put off the hour of reckoning."

"That is all I aim at, John. You will be better able to do it to-morrow. You are nervous and excited now, and those who meet you cannot fail to notice it. Come—you gave me your promise, and you cannot say it is out of reason."

The name of Clinton Moore was not mentioned again between them, and finally, though with some reluctance, John Bosworth turned about and went to his home.

"Have you seen the sheriff?" asked Sarah Bosworth, as her husband entered the sitting-room.

"No. I am going to wait until to-morrow."

The little woman had got over her share of anger, and she proceeded to more cheerful subjects. The children came in when the lamps were lighted, and as the evening wore pleasantly on John's face had lost its angry look, and when bed-time came hardly a trace of the storm was to be seen.

The morning dawned bright and beautiful, and when John Bosworth arose his wife was singing at her work.

He had slept soundly, and he had awakened refreshed and strong. He dressed himself, and walked out into his garden, and by-and-by he thought of Clinton Moore. And what did he think?

Had the heart of John Bosworth softened?

Not at all; for it had never been hardened. Then why was his face so bright, and why did he reflect calmly upon the subject of the wrong which had been done unto himself?

Simply because the demon had left him.

His feelings towards Moore had not materially changed; but the evil desire which had found place in his soul had passed away.

In short, by casting anchor for the night he had outridden the storm of vengeful passion, and now reason was at the helm.

Before he had been blinded; but now he saw. Before he had been driven by the whirlwind; but now all was calm.

And thus he said to himself:

"If I seize Clinton Moore's property, and turn him out of doors, what benefit can come to me? People will sympathize with him, and he will say worse things of me than he has ever yet said. No good can come of it in any way; and I should, after

all, have the heaviest load to bear. I suppose he feels sore at the failure of his mining stock; but if I let him alone he will get over it by-and-by, and then all will come out right."

Two hours later a good-looking man walked down the street towards his place of business—not such a man as walked there on the previous afternoon! for that man had worn a vengeful, vindictive, malevolent look, while this man's face was bold and frank, and wore a look of calmness and dignity.

Strange what a metamorphosis the sleep of a night had performed! But, mind you, there was as much change within as without.

That man had been in a heat of passion, his blood burning with fever, and his heart pulsating painfully, while this man was calm and healthful, with a heart all right.

Towards noon Clinton Moore came into the office. He was very nervous, and seemed ill at ease; but at length he made known his errand. He had come to know if Mr. Bosworth was going to press that execution.

"What makes you ask me that question?" returned Bosworth. He was very calm, for the consciousness of rectitude gave him power.

"I heard that you meant to make a levy upon me at once," said Moore, still trembling with apprehension. For, mind you, Clinton Moore had had time to sleep upon it, and he was very sorry for what he had said. He not only realized that he had said things that were very unjust, but he had also come to reflect that the man whom he had abused had it in his power to bring a direful calamity upon him.

"I did think of such a thing," explained Bosworth; "but I have had time for reflection, and have thought better of it. You need fear no evil at my hands."

Clinton Moore's aspect changed in an instant.

"John," he cried, "will you take my hand?"

"Certainly, Clinton."

"I, too," pursued the relieved man, "have had time for reflection, and I know that I did very wrong. My reflection came too late to save me from the commission of the wrong; but it has come in season to lead me to ask your pardon."

We need picture no more. The cloud was gone, the bitter feelings dispersed, and warm friendship restored between the two men.

To the man of hardened heart and vengeful, malevolent disposition, sleep may not bring forgetfulness of evil purpose; but the man of generous, impulsive heart, and warm, active sympathies, may always be the gainer by allowing one night of sweet, balmy sleep to intervene between the planning of revenge and the execution thereof.

B. C. J.

"SI, SENORITA, SI."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE boat soon struck the shore. Beall was unbound and made to disembark. A keg of water and half a barrel of hard bread were left with him as his scanty store of rations. He gazed after the retreating vessel, and heaped the vilest imprecations upon Don Manuel and his crew of inhuman pirates; and then seating himself upon a piece of timber, the remains of some ill-fated wreck, wept to think of his own sad fate and that of his lost Isabel. For a long time his tears flowed with all the ease and simplicity of a child. The sun went down, twilight passed rapidly and silently away; the sea-towls came nestling to their places of rest, the stars came out; and one dull, universal stillness came over the lonely scene, unbroken save by the constant and monotonous surge of the waves and the mournful sighing of the dreary wind.

And there he sat like a spectre, presiding as it were over the hideous solitude that surrounded him. He was alone with his thoughts—alone with his miseries.

Home, home that he should never more behold, was far away over the deep blue sea. Why had he ever wandered from it? Why had not his fate been that of his sweet little sister Grace, who perished in her childhood?

All night long he sat on the hard timber, his barrel of biscuits and keg of water at his side, dumb companions of his cheerless exile.

The rosy beams of morning illumined the hazy clouds. The pirate craft was no longer in sight. The wild birds flitting close by his hatless head went out to seek their daily food; the globelike sun, reluctant to withdraw himself from the sparkling waters, and clinging to the verge until his full, round face in oblong shape appeared, arose to mock him with the thought that while all creation was rejoicing in these cheerful beams—the husbandman going forth to his labours, the maiden to cull her morning flowers, the truant child to chase his butterfly, the lowing herd and the busy insect world—the bright sun could shine no more for him.

"Shine on, shine on, thou majestic light!" he exclaimed; "perhaps thou makest someone happy. As for me, the midnight of wickedness has shut me up in its loathsome caverns amidst toads and scorpions and crawling worms, from whose dark pits I am permitted to gaze upon thee and yet not feel thy genial warmth. Blow, ye dreary winds—howl, ye restless billows!"

His eyes were wild, the corners of his mouth twitched violently, and a spasmodic trembling seized his frame. He shook from head to foot, and clutched the timber to sustain himself. Raving, he exclaimed:

"Ha, ha! 'I'm monarch of all I survey!' I'm a king!—yes, I'm a king!"

And with the last word he reeled from his seat, falling on the sand. A deathlike pallor came over his face, heavy and difficult breathing succeeded, and finally sleep followed, and a more natural expression of countenance intervened.

Then nature, no longer tortured by the spirit which was broken, relapsed into a state of calm repose. His face was half turned to the sun; but the scorching rays of mid-day did not awaken him, and in the cool of the evening he still slept.

No sooner had the terrified negroes at the ranch borne the frightful tidings to their overseer, who was attending some business in a remote part of the plantation, than he made all possible dispatch towards Santiago.

Arrived there, his first duty was to disclose to the family the heartrending news.

The two remaining sisters, in the deepest distress, immediately applied to the Governor, who heard them with tender solicitude, and promised to start a vessel as early as practicable in pursuit.

The overseer's next desire was to find Mr. Miller and inform him of the great calamity that had befallen his captain.

To that end he diligently applied himself to the task, calling at the boarding-houses for sailors, at one of which he hoped to find him.

He had nearly given it up in despair, when passing by a public-house in the Calle de San Bernard, towards the close of the day, he thought he would inquire of a short round old gentleman, sitting in a chair in the veranda, who looked like the proprietor of the place, if a man of the name of Miller, an Englishman, were stopping with him.

The fat old man, smiling all over his good-natured face, bowed his head half a dozen times, and replied:

"Si, senor, si."

It was our old blacksmith, who, tired of the forge, and lonesome since the departure of the little blue-eyed lass of Pedro, had removed and opened a boarding-house.

"Si, senor, si; walk in, sir. I will call the gentleman; si, si, that I will, sir; si, si, si."

As the overseer entered, the old fellow scrambled off to the dining-room, rolling at each step like a clumsy ship in a heavy seaway. Presently he returned, and Miller with him.

"This is your man, sir; si, si, this is your man."

The mate recognized the overseer, and was glad to see him; but the deepest sorrow was depicted on his countenance when informed of the kidnapping.

"The Spanish pirate shall yet pay for this," hissed the keen little sailor through his clenched teeth, swearing for the first time in twenty years, and rubbing his hips till his hand turned white with friction.

"I'll lay a wager it's Pedro and Don Manuel. I know it's them; si, si, I know it's them," said the corpulent host.

"I think as much myself," chimed in the overseer.

"Whoever they may be, gentlemen," said Miller, "they'll yet rue the day they saw Captain Beall."

"I know that Pedro," resumed the old man; "si, si, I know him. I used to live opposite his house in the Calle de San Carlos, that I did, si, si; and he had a daughter I thought a great deal of; si, si, that he had; and she used to come in my shop and talk to me while I worked at the forge; si, si, and I used to pity her, to have such a bad father; si, si, pity, pity. However, gentlemen, any man that gets that girl for a wife will find a prize; si, si, if he don't you may screw me up in a vice; si, si, that you may."

All the time our old friend was going on in this style Miller was asking the overseer respecting the particulars of the occurrence at the ranch.

"Let the caballero come in and get some dinner," broke in the old man—"si, si, some dinner. Some of these days, Senor Englishman, you may have the pleasure of meeting your friend the captain, and with him punish the desperadoes who have stolen him away, with his pretty little senorita and her mother; si, si, that you may."

The overseer showed no inclination to disobey the cordial invitation of his host; and ignoring all false

modesty, partook largely of the viands set before him, which consisted of soup, with fish and beef as a relish, followed by bananas cooked in wine, young cocoa-nuts prepared in their milk, with coffee, wine, and cigars; all these things, of course, except some of the last-mentioned, were well saturated with olive-oil, and highly flavoured with garlic and other vegetables.

Leaving him to finish his pleasant repast, our old friend the blacksmith went out again upon the veranda to see how his little guest, the mate of the Patterson, was consoling himself over the bad news he had just heard.

Miller was walking from one end of the porch to the other, his brow dark and heavy, and his lips closed tightly together.

"I can never return to England until I have found Captain Beall," he said, speaking more to himself than to his corpulent host. "If I only had a vessel, I would this day pursue the villains; and by the gods I would find them if they were within the bounds of the Western Ocean. My blue jacket for a vessel!"

"You'll have an opportunity to ship in such an expedition, I think—si, si. The government will send out a cruiser after them. The Griffin family is well known—si, si, that it is; and so is the Cruz. When it shall have become published fully that Don Manuel has kidnapped the senora and her daughter, we shall see that he'll have to make good heels of it, or he'll not be able to escape—no, not he."

"Poor creatures," said Miller; "I fear they will all be murdered before anything can be done for them. Your Spanish pirates are the most unmerciful desperadoes unhung."

"Si, si, Englishman; but all pirates are not Spaniards. You should not judge a whole nation by a few of its bad men. Si, si, there are more Kidds in England than Don Pedros in Cuba—si, si. But we'll not quarrel. In less than ten days there will be sent from this very port a vessel in search of the offenders, and you will have the privilege of going with them, si, si, if you can, and of catching the scoundrels and of hanging them to the yardarm—si, si, to the yardarm," said the blacksmith, with great force.

"But, mine host," said Miller, "where will they be by that time?"

"In the world or out of it, si, si. But you can't fly, my good little man, any more than I can, though you're not half so big. There's plenty of men who know where the pirates live. Two or three ounces—si, si, two or three ounces—will find them. Don't be impatient. You people of the Continent are very fast, si, si, are very fast; but it's no use to go ahead of time. You'll get old before you know it, si, si, that you will; and you'll run your government out before you really know what it's worth, si, si. Don't hammer your iron before it gets hot—don't hammer your iron before it gets hot."

Miller felt the justness of the old man's rebuke, and comprehending his meaning in regard to the two or three ounces affair, after getting as much out of the overseer as he could in relation to the matter, and the probable direction taken by the pirates, retired to his room to digest the whole matter, and lay plans to rescue Beall and his unfortunate friends.

The overseer, weary with his long journey, the most part of which he had performed on foot, followed the example of the mate; and our old blacksmith was left alone on the porch, sitting in a huge arm-chair, with his ponderous hands crossed, and patting his foot to a little choros that ran thus:

An old gray nan had just begun
To say her prayers one day, oh!
An old black cat jumped at a rat,
And made her say, "Carajo!"
Oh, do, do, old nan,
Oh, do old nan, to swear so!

It was now towards the hour of twilight, and the gay donnas, with their light mantillas, were passing his door in the direction of the plaza.

To these he paid not much attention, and did not observe that one of them had entered his domestic, till Juanita, in the garb we left her in the wood near Guantimo, stood before him.

Inexpressible surprise prevented the honest old man from rising from his seat and embracing the handsome girl.

Her clothes were soiled, and her general appearance gave token of exposure to the weather and lack of rest.

"And this, by all the iron in my old shop in San Carlos, is my little daughter, si, si!" exclaimed the old fellow after his astonishment had sufficiently abated. "Will my child relate to me where she came from, and what brings her here in this plight? for although I am overjoyed to see her, I must think there is something not exactly right in all this, si, si—not exactly right in all this," looking at her muddy boots, and torn skirt.

"You will cease to look so inquiringly at my want of toilet, my good friend, when you have heard my

story. I have come a long way, am tired and hungry. Give me some supper, a room, and a good bed, and to-morrow you shall know all."

"That I will, si, si, if it were the last I had in the house," answered the blacksmith, rising from his seat and patting Juanita on the shoulder.

"But stop, my kind señor, I have something for you to attend to. Do you remember the last grand ball at the club?"

"Si, señorita. I have not seen you since."

"Did you ever hear the cause of the mob that night, the destruction of my father's house, and our flight from Santiago?"

"Si, señorita. Your father's guest, Don Manuel, the noted highwayman, was supposed to have attempted the life of a man named Delfosse: so, at least, the papers said next day."

"Can you tell me, señor, what became of the wounded gentleman?"

"He recovered from the wound, my pet little questioner: since then I have heard nothing of him, and there's no reason I should; si, si, that's all I have any right to know about it."

"That man," continued the girl, "is the prisoner of Don Manuel. With me he attempted to escape from the robber's cave at Guantánimo, but having lost him on our route to the city, I am confident he has been recaptured. What I want you to do, my more than father, is to report this to the Governor, and doubtless he will send a detachment of soldiers to rescue the noble señor, and capture the bold highwayman."

"But your father, señorita; what will become of him?" asked the blacksmith, in a whisper.

"I cannot tell, señor. Whether I am the most ungrateful child living, or whether it is because I cannot love vice, even in a parent, or whether it is from some other cause, I cannot express, but Señor Delfosse is dearer to me than Pedro ever was."

"Si, si; my daughter is interested in the fate of the prisoner."

"So much so, señor, that to-morrow, weary as I am from my long journey on foot, I will go with a guard as a guide to Guantánimo, if my—if the one they call my father should suffer the fate of Don Manuel himself."

"You've a fever, child. I fear you need rest and refreshment, si, si. Come now to your room; I will show it to you, and prepare yourself for supper; I will go then to the Governor and state your case, si, si. I am glad to have my pretty blonde muchacha for a guest so soon. How did you find me, child?"

"The old woman that lives in your former place in the Calle de San Carlos told me, of course."

"Si, si, of course. And you had nothing to do but come straight along, si, si; and I'm glad to see your meek blue eyes once more."

"The old man slid over the floor in his slippers with the dexterity of a youth, and Juanita was soon comfortably and pleasantly cared for in the Casa del San Bernardo."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE dewdrop was yet clinging to the rose-leaf, and the sun had not appeared above the surrounding heights, and few people had begun to move about the narrow streets of Santiago, when the jolly host of San Bernardo, in his shirt-sleeves, with his collar laid open to his shoulders, and his slippers down at heel, sat in his comfortable veranda, and told the story of Juanita to Miller and the overseer, who, like himself, were accustomed to early rising.

The last-named individual, who was rather dull when the raising of sugar and coffee was not the topic, had very little to say to the old man's interesting narrative, except to offer now and then an exclamation as if to embellish the tale, and to doubt that anyone could be human who could be at Guantánimo one day and at Tarquina three days afterwards.

But Miller was wild with excitement, and the idea that Don Manuel had most likely taken the whole party to the cave gave him a determination not only to join the detachment of the government, if one should be sent, but to use his utmost exertions in obtaining permission from his Excellency to furnish the men.

But in carrying out his latter resolution he had, fortunately, no labour to perform; for before an hour had passed a lieutenant of cavalry, leading a beautiful pony, was at the door in quest of Juanita, who, through her offer to the old man, was to act as a guide for the soldiers.

Miller, without much parley, obtained permission of the lieutenant to accompany them; and Juanita, refreshed by a quiet slumber during the past night, appeared in a new dress, purchased the evening before, looking as fresh and beautiful as the morning itself.

Mine host, who, by-the-by, was as gallant and polite as he was honest and kind, handed the young

girl to the saddle, and fixed her foot in the stirrup, much to the chagrin of the youthful soldier, who was struck at first sight with the foreign style and commanding beauty of his female guide.

Already deeply interested in the fate of all the captives, and especially in that of Delfosse, of whom his little pet spoke so eloquently, and for whom she was willing to expose to the world the guilt of her reputed father, the old man followed the trio to the barracks; and by the time he had arrived there had so fully imbibed the spirit of adventure that with the consent of the commander of the expedition he mounted a mule scarcely as large in the girth as himself; and riding by the side of Juanita, looked more like the leader of the band than the young lieutenant who had charge of the soldiers.

On the other side of the girl rode the quick-witted mate of the ill-fated Patterson, and just behind followed twenty-four mounted soldiers, well armed, and pleased with the change from dull camp life to a ride into the country and a dash of active service.

Juanita, hoping in her heart that her father would not be at the cave when they reached there, yet determined to save Delfosse at all hazards, was refreshed by the cool mountain air, and entertained her two companions by relating to them the adventures attending her long and lonely journey after the capture of Delfosse.

She did not see him any more after he left her in the wood.

Having a pleasant place to recline on and rest her weary limbs (thanks to his kind attention), she immediately fell into an insensible slumber from which she did not awake until the slanting shadow of the distant mountains and adjacent trees gave unmistakable evidence of approaching evening.

She arose, at first surprised by her long sleep, and then frightened to find that she was alone.

The thought that Delfosse was recaptured flashed across her mind, and without waiting to ask herself any more questions, or to give herself any time to doubt, she struck out boldly for Santiago.

The sun had already disappeared, and darkness, only relieved by the delicate rays of the evening star, and her diamond sisters of lesser brilliancy, was rapidly approaching.

She directed her way along the foot of the mountains, knowing that, if she followed them westwardly until they swept round towards the north, as if to grasp the little bay and its surroundings, she would reach the city.

Circumstances alter cases.

How different were her feelings and conduct now from what they were on the night before!

Now she walked with an elastic step that tired not, nor slid from the path. Then she stumbled upon every rock, and hung heavily on the arm of her companion for support.

Now she knows no fear, nor seeks any sympathy. Then she nestled in his bosom for protection.

Now she is a bold, daring heroine; then a soft, lovely woman.

Now the sprite of the wild plains of the Great Antille; then the fit companion of the stronger sex.

It matters not how wild, how full of gay feelings a woman has when alone, if, in her associations with man, she lays those things aside, and makes herself appear what she really is, all coyness, all retiring, all gentle, sweet and tender—womanly!

Such was Juanita.

With her petticoat tucked up—showing her beautiful ankles without reserve to the embrace of the tall, dewy grass, that sometimes clung so closely to them that she had to stoop down and disentwine its affectionate tendrils from their grasp—she forded each muddy stream, and climbed each rocky elevation, until morning came again, and showed her a herdman's ranch, from which, by the aid of the keeper of the flocks, she finished her journey late in the evening of the following day, and arrived at the house of her old friend, as we have before seen, only to retrace her steps the next morning, and make it the third time she had travelled from Santiago to Guantánimo.

At a small plantation where several negro men were taking sugar-canes in carts drawn by oxen to a mill turned by mules, under a pleasant grove of palms, where a dozen sleek African women were trimming off the leaves and preparing the stalks for the rollers, and others sitting idly beneath tall coco-nuts, nursing their young ones, the party of the blacksmith, who was ostensibly the leader of the band, made a halt to rest and obtain refreshment.

The sight of twenty soldiers in yellow uniforms terrified these dwellers of the wilderness, and but for a young Spaniard and two or three of his father's more intelligent slaves, the little ranch would have been completely deserted.

The persuasions of those who had been themselves to the town, however, were sufficient to calm the others.

By two young girls, dressed in nothing else save long thin gowns that showed their pretty forms to lovely nature, with but a veil between, they were all refreshed with a pleasant cup of coffee, and, to those who wanted such, green corn and rich fruit.

The caballero himself came in from the cane-field, and after being informed of the errand of the party, procured a firkin of rum, and with the half of a coco-nut shell, the insipid beverage was dipped out and handed around by the old blacksmith and Miller to the anxious soldiers, whose mouths watered at the sight of the deeply coloured liquor.

While Juanita rested in the little thatched cottage with the women the men drank and chatted until the small hours of the night, when the young girl was aroused, and they all mounted and rode off in an easterly direction; some of them, from the manner in which they reeled in their saddles, having had rather too much of the caballero's rum.

Straight towards the car, the young girl led the detachment.

The soldiers now riding in front, and the three civilians in the rear.

Of the few men left to guard the prisoner at Guantánimo, not one of them was captured.

They escape through secret passages, known only to themselves, and left Delfosse alone in his dungeon. As they rode up, Juanita, who had made up her mind to be the first to enter the cell, could only point to the grated door, while her lips were closed by the feelings of her heart.

Miller sprang from his mule, and in a few minutes led the captive into the open air. His eye was first directed to the soldiers standing around, with their arms drawn, ready for any emergency. Then they fell upon the girl, who still sat upon her horse, with her eyes cast down to the ground, as she tapped the tip of her boot with her riding-whip. Delfosse did not wait to see how beautiful she looked, but springing forward, exclaimed:

"My precious deliverer!" and caught her hand between both his own, kissed it and pressed it, until the rich blood beneath shone through the transparent skin.

"That makes me feel very good—si, si, that it does!" exclaimed the blacksmith, now mine host of the San Bernardo. "I would give the world to be just his age, si, si—gentleman, I tell you that man is born to luck."

Delfosse turned to the soldiers, thanked them; and looking upon Mr. Miller and the corpulent host, who had scrambled from the back of his faithful Rosinante to rest himself and it, and smiling at the great contrast between the two, gracefully inquired who they were, as he said he did not wish to be ignorant of the names of those who had so generously volunteered to rescue him from the worst of confinement.

"Never mind about me," replied the host. "The best way to know a man is to read him, si, si, just like you would a book."

"My name is Miller," replied the other. "I am an Englishman—a shipwrecked Englishman, the mate of the William G. Patterson, Captain James Magruder Beall. I am here to-day seeking for him at the risk of my life."

"Captain Beall, of London?" anxiously inquired Delfosse.

"The same," replied Miller.

"By Jupiter! my old friend of the Harkaway! Tell me, good man, where can I find him?"

"Alas, sir! I fear that is impossible. At all events, the story is so long that I should have to prepare your mind to understand what has become of him. We thought he might be here. On our route to Santiago I will find an opportunity to tell you all," said Miller, looking sad over his disappointment.

"Do so," answered Delfosse. "I shall be most happy to hear anything that may relate to my best-loved friend."

After sacking the cave, in which they found many valuables, the soldiers remounted; and at the suggestion of the lieutenant, Delfosse shared with him the back of his sturdy animal, the strongest in the company.

They left Guantánimo in time to reach the ranch where they had stopped on the outward journey.

It was here that the Frenchman took Miller aside after supper, and entreated him to tell him all he knew that related in the least to his beloved friend. Miller admired the open manners of his new acquaintance, and already liked him because he was warmly attached to Beall.

His narrative was therefore given without reserve. When the honest sailor began to speak of Tarquina the eye of the Frenchman brightened.

He now could hear of Isabel, the circumstances of her death, and all particulars in regard to her illness; for, thought he, if Miller has been in Santiago for some time, his connection with the family is such as to cause him to be interested enough in



[ALONE.]

its affairs to know the facts of such an important event as the death of one of its members.

And when he spoke of her kindness to them at the grotto on the night of the disaster a tear gathered in his eye, and he exclaimed:

"Next to my own, here is the hands into which I would have had you fallen. But go on, sir."

"You know, sir," continued Miller, "the captain had met this young lady before at Santiago, and she had not forgotten her engagements with him at that time, either."

"What engagements, my friend?" asked Delfosse.

"Why, to be sure, that little courtship of theirs. I don't suppose, sir, two people ever loved each other better."

"Do you think Isabel really loved Beall?" inquired Delfosse, his keen gray eyes piercing through those of Miller's.

"If ever there was a saint in heaven or a gale of wind at sea, sir, I have seen enough myself to convince anyone that they ought to be and will be man and wife, if they both like. Why, my good sir," continued Miller, unconsciously lacerating the Frenchman to his very heartstrings, "I've seen her lean upon his arm as if she wished for no better place; and one day, when she thought no one was looking at her, as he lay asleep she knelt at the side of his bed, and with her scissors cut a lock of hair from his head, and kissed it and placed it in her bosom."

Delfosse let his gaze fall from the sailor to the ground, and, picking up a small stick, played with it in the sand.

For some time he did not reply. After awhile he took a long breath, and, in forced cheerfulness, said:

"So you think they will be married, then?"

"As sure as we sit here, sir."

"Have you not heard that Isabel is dead?"

"By no means, sir."

"But she is; and Mr. Beall, or Captain Beall, as you call him, will never have the pleasure of marrying her, Mr. Miller."

"On the contrary, my friend, she is not dead, but even now the prisoner of Don Manuel."

Whereupon Miller related to Delfosse the whole story of the kidnapping.

It was a long time before Delfosse could appreciate the fact that Isabel was still living, and that he had been the dupe of the crafty robber. But it was impossible to discredit the evidence adduced by Miller.

But after all, how fortunate had been the deception! The intended poison had proved to be the very best medicine.

By learning to regard her as dead he had schooled himself to give her up; and hence he could better reconcile himself to submitting quietly to the state of things represented by Miller.

That he was severely hurt was too apparent in his downcast looks and bitten lips, but in his heart there was no jealousy.

He listened patiently to the unpleasant news of her unfaithfulness; but when told of the great misfortune that had befallen them all, and the bold temerity of their common enemy, his inmost soul was aroused; and Beall and Isabel, though the one had betrayed his confidence and the other her plighted faith, were now regarded as a brother and sister, who must be rescued even at the risk of his own life.

"They are all my friends," said he. "They shall be our mutual friends, and we will save them at all hazards."

Miller caught the hand of the good Frenchman, and while a tear started from his eye, exclaimed, with emotion:

"Heaven will bless you! I have suffered too much with my dear captain to be separated from him thus, and perhaps for ever. I swear to serve you, most generous sir, in any capacity, in any expedition that may have for its object the avenging of his wrongs."

"Then, when we shall have arrived at Santiago the matter shall be arranged, and we will go in search of our kidnapped friends. I have sad misgivings, though, as to the fate of some of them, for Don Manuel is a desperate character, and his jealousy is so great that he probably will not stop short of murder if he find out that Beall is a rival."

Delfosse spoke of Beall as the lover of Isabel without betraying the least emotion. The storm had passed.

"The robber, then, is the captain's rival?" remarked Miller. "Yes, but Isabel doesn't care a straw for her infamous cousin. But here comes my sweet liberator. I will see you in the city."

Miller retired as Juanita advanced.

Delfosse arose from his rustic seat at the foot of the majestic palm, and taking the young girl by the hand, led her to the place and sat down by her side.

"I have not had an opportunity, my dearest deliverer, to thank you for all the trouble, danger and privation you have suffered to rescue me from the hands of those bad men. Believe me, my sweet angel, I will ever appreciate your more than sister's kindness. Here is a pledge, my dear Juanita—a diamond ring. Let me put it on your finger; and while that jewel sparkles know that my friendship lives the same."

"Friendship," thought Juanita, "is too cold a word. Have I not merited his love?"

She suffered him to place the ring upon her finger in silence.

"Where may I find you in the city?" asked Delfosse.

Alas! for the first time Juanita realized that she was homeless.

"I know not, unless at the house of my old friend the blacksmith. I am worse off than an orphan."

She buried her face in her hands and wept.

"Be not distressed, most lovely girl. Am I not your brother? Shall I not now return the aid you have so unselfishly given me? You shall never want protection while I live."

"But I am nothing," said she, "but a poor child, the offspring of a robber; so, at least, the world believes. And though I have never felt towards him as a child should feel, and though he has never caressed me as a parent should a child, yet must I bear his name."

"By the gods! Juanita, no one shall ever blame you for the deeds of your unnatural father. As your brother, I will allow you to suffer nothing that I myself can bear. You shall be known as Juanita; and as you look more like the French than the Spanish, I will call you sister, and you shall be known as Juanita Delfosse. You shall go with me wherever I go, and if fortune smile, you shall never want."

Juanita sighed.

All this would do very well; but there was something too dry, too prosy, too matter of fact, about it for the warm-hearted girl.

To be the sister of the one she began to love was like placing a barrier between them too formal. There would hereafter be no romance in his kiss of her hand, no thrill when his bright eye met the languid blue of hers, no joyous trembling under the weight of his heavy arm as it encircled her pliant waist.

Delfosse observed her serious countenance, and examining better than ever before the admirable features of her charming face, was almost shocked with its likeness to one he knew and loved, despite his faults.

The hour had arrived for them to retire to rest ere resuming their journey, and they separated for the night.

Before sunrise the next day the little cavalcade was again on the march, having been most hospitably entertained at the ranch.

(To be continued.)



MARION.

CHAPTER I.

Wild, wild wind, wilt thou never cease thy sighing?
Dark, dark night, wilt thou never wear away?

THE tempest was over; the heavy clouds were breaking into fragments, and drifting away, like the banners of a retreating army, and the star-fires burned dimly above, while the young moon was setting, white and wan, amid the wild waters of the Gulf. Its weird light struck across the curling surge, the shattered spars floating by, like a stormy petrel bathing its fleet wings in the spray, the curlews and cormorants perched here and there on some shattered hulk, rising bare and bold from the waves, and the ill-fated vessel, to which the lull in the tempest had come too late, had just struck on hidden reefs.

There had been a sudden crash, sending a thrill of dread to the stoutest hearts on board; a wild tumult on deck; the hasty prayer for rest, for peace and pardon in the land beyond the grave, as pale faces were upturned in the dim light; the gleam of white arms, as the young and the fair sank "unconfined and unknelt," into the great sepulchre of the sea, and then the captain's cry:

"To the boats—to the boats, my men, do not let a passenger be lost!"

The command had been obeyed, and desperate were the attempts now made to rescue those struggling in the waters, but the waves still ran high, and the first two of these boats were soon engulfed in the billows. The third, which had been manned by the gallant sailors who had exerted every effort to save the ship, seemed destined to out-ride the storm. More than once it sank almost to the water's edge by a violent plunge, or was well-nigh overturned by the heavy timbers with which the Gulf was strewn; nevertheless, they managed to keep their frail craft afloat.

The night hours dragged by; morning broke, bright and beautiful, and the sunshine burned goldenly over the waters to which they had committed themselves; noon came and went, and the long, long summer afternoon wore away; the moon arose and set in pale splendour, and the Southern cross flamed in all its glory in the clear blue depths of the sky, but still the crew of the Rover were at the mercy of the wind and waves.

Thus six dawns and sunsets burned and faded over the Gulf, and yet no sail was in sight. The seventh day found the castaways worn and wasted by suffer-

[FRANCIS MARION REFUSES TO BECOME A PIRATE.]

ing, their faces haggard, their eyes glittering with unnatural fire, as they strained them to catch a glimpse of some far-off vessel glimmering on the horizon, like a blessed home light to the tired and footsore wanderer, or the fair bastions of the celestial city to the pilgrim amid the valley of shadows, and the cold rush of the stream beyond.

Among these castaways there might have been seen a young man, with a slender, supple form, a well-moulded head, and a face, whose strongly marked features, and dark, deep, steadfast eyes, even at that period, bespoke power, will, energy. This was Francis Marion, the representative of a Huguenot family, whose ancestor had been exiled from France for having embraced the Protestant faith.

As the seventh morning broke, one of his comrades cast an eager gaze around him, and then said, bitterly:

"There's no help for us, messmate—we may as well lie down and die!" and he sank into the bottom of the boat in an agony passing description.

"I cannot give up yet," cried Marion, earnestly; "my good mother was strongly opposed to my being a sailor, but when we parted, she told me that during a storm she should always pray for me. It cheered me even when our ship struck, and has been a consoling thought since. Once more I will look for help—perhaps it may not be in vain now."

As he spoke, the young man's glance wandered to the leeward; the calm which mariners dread far more than the dangers of a tempest, had settled on the waters; far away—

The idle sea-weed glistened in the sun,

The idle sea-fowl dried their steaming wings.

The idle swell crept whispering towards young Marion's boat, and broke softly against its hulk.

But what was it that sent a sudden crimson to his cheek, and made his heart throb with quicker pulsations than it had known for six weary days?

There was something white gleaming in the dim distance: it is true, it might only be the wing of a passing bird, or perchance a fleecy cloud, which would melt away like the mirage of the desert, or the rosy dreams of a lost love.

With what intense yearning Francis Marion watched it no language can tell; but at length he felt assured he could not be mistaken.

"There is a sail in sight," he said, mentally, "but the ship makes no progress; I fear she is becalmed, heaven grant that may not be her fate, when we are dying."

While his gaze was still fixed on the distant vessel, the wind sprang up, and the sea began to lose its quiet.

"The breeze freshens," exclaimed Marion, as the wind tossed back the thick hair from his forehead—"I shall hope now. There—there, now she begins to dance quite merrily." Then, in a voice which fell gratefully on his companions' ears, he cried, "A sail—a sail!"

"A sail!" echoed his comrades—"you must have gone mad, Francis Marion!"

"No, I would not speak till I was certain of the truth; there is a sail in sight."

"Where away, messmate?"

"Look to the leeward and see for yourself!"

His comrades lifted their heads, and glancing in the direction indicated, perceived the sight for which they had so long and anxiously watched.

"Hail her," faltered one; "I am too weak."

A new energy seemed to inspire Francis Marion. He raised a signal at the stern of the boat, and in stentorian tones shouted:

"Ship ahoy—ship ahoy!"

His cry reached the vessel, and in a few moments there came a ringing to his ear through the speaking-trumpet:

"Boat ahoy!—your signal tells us you're in distress, and we'll soon be alongside."

The course of the vessel was now turned, and in half an hour our poor castaways' boat was alongside the stranger ship.

Marion rapidly told how their ship, the Rover, bound to Havana, had been wrecked in the tempest a week previous; how the rest of the boats had been engulfed, and with what difficulty they had kept their little craft above water.

With touching eloquence he described the eagerness with which they had, day after day, watched for a sail—the suffering they had endured from hunger and thirst, and the utter despair which had settled on his comrades, as they lay down to die, the half-frantic joy which had kindled into their aching eyes, and made their sluggish pulses bound, when he had brought the glad tidings that a sail was in sight.

The captain and crew listened intently, and all that was generous in their commander's nature was aroused.

"My heaven!" he cried, with French impetuosity; "if any man had a heart hard enough to be unmoved by this boat's crew of castaways, and the story you tell, 'tis not Basil Roge! Come aboard, my poor fellows—come aboard; it shall go hard if we cannot find a spare hammock and wholesome food for each of you!"

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Marion; "were you an angel, your words could not cheer us more;" and turning to his exhausted companions, he said, "Rise, messmates, our terrible task is at an end."

The castaways endeavoured to obey, but with their wasted energies it seemed impossible; and the captain, who had bent an earnest gaze on the forlorn occupants of the boat, perceiving their inability to make the slight exertion required, exclaimed:

"Bear a hand, my men—the poor fellows are not able to gain the deck."

The sailors sprang to their relief, but Marion motioned them back, when they would have approached him, and said, with a gravity beyond his years:

"Help my mesmates—I do not need you!"

With these words he glanced up and began his ascent, but as he did so he perceived a bright young face peering over the gunwale in girlish curiosity. The next moment he heard the captain's voice, murmuring:

"Back to the cabin, Adrienne."

The girl shook her head with a vehemence which sent a shower of dark glossy curls around her face and shoulders, and replied, with the air of one who is quite sure of her own ground:

"Not yet, *mon père*—not till I see what is going on."

The captain smiled, as he exclaimed:

"I tell you that it is no place for you on deck now." And he pointed significantly towards the companion way.

Still the perverse maiden kept her post, and there could scarcely have been a prettier picture than she formed when Francis Marion gained the deck.

There she stood leaning against the bulwark in an attitude of careless grace, her slight figure set off to advantage by a jaunty tunic of scarlet cloth, falling open to reveal a gay velvet bodice; a short, full, white skirt, a pair of dainty high-heeled slippers, decorated with bright knots of ribbon, and the tasseled cap, which lent such picturesque effect to her restless little head.

Young Marion was both surprised and pleased at the agreeable vision which rose before him; the next moment she glided towards him, and murmured:

"I have disregarded my father's wishes in staying on deck, but I will not go back to the cabin till I have heard the worst. What has happened, pray?"

"Our ship has been wrecked, and this is the seventh day that we have been at the mercy of wind and wave—this is the first sail we have seen in that long, long week."

The arch smile faded from the girl's lips, as she rejoined:

"You must have suffered."

"Oh, yes," continued the young man, "I can never forget it while I remember anything; several of my companions are so exhausted that they are not able to gain the deck alone, and to-day, just before I spied your sail, they lay down in the bottom of the boat to die."

Adrienne's eyes grew misty with tears, and when the crew brought forward the other castaways she said, shudderingly:

"Here they come I must leave you—I cannot bear to look at them," and she retreated to the cabin.

It was well that she had retired, for all was now stir and excitement on the deck of the stranger ship. The poor sailors were borne to more comfortable quarters, where they could be screened from the southern sunshine and yet feel the cool waft of the breeze before which the vessel was dancing on at the rate of eight knots an hour.

When their immediate wants had been supplied the captain paused in the midst of the forlorn group, and said:

"*Mes amis*, we meet as strangers, on the wide, wide sea, but I trust we shall soon be on the best of terms. You have fallen into the hands of Basil Roget, master of a merchant vessel which has been christened *La Reine du Mer*. We are bound for the Bermudas, and thither we will take you. When we get into port you may perhaps find some craft bound to England, and if not you can ship with us for Cuba, where we are to stop on our homeward voyage."

"Aye, aye, sir," responded the castaways, in a breath, and then their names were registered, and the customary business resumed.

Night came on, serene and starry, and Francis Marion's companions were wrapped in that profound slumber which had succeeded their utter prostration, but he still stood wakeful and vigilant by the bulwark.

His eyes flamed, his cheek burned, and the blood in his veins seemed like molten lava.

It was late when the captain came up the companion way, and pausing at his side, said:

"Why are you not asleep, my lad?"

"I cannot rest, sir; all night I have found it impossible to get a moment's slumber."

"Ah, I see," rejoined the captain, with a quick nod; "you held out to the last, when your mesmates sank down to die; you watched, and hailed us—nay, more, you would have no assistance when you came aboard, but you could not have done it, young as you are, had

not a feverish excitement nerved you. You are ill, my boy."

The young man shook his head dissentingly, but Captain Roget exclaimed:

"Do not try to deceive me, for I understand these matters. My parents intended that I should be a son of *Æsculapius*, but I had too roving a disposition, and preferred to follow the sea. My knowledge, however, is often of service on ship-board, and I predict you will have fever before we reach the Bermudas. Nevertheless, I will do what I can to ward it off, if you will trust yourself to my care; follow me."

He ascended the narrow steps of the companion way, and ushered Marion into his own cabin, simply furnished, but lined with maps and diagrams, and the table covered with small charts, a mariner's compass, and many works on navigation, in various languages.

Roget pointed the youth to a seat, and then summoning a tall negress, whom Marion afterwards discovered to be his daughter's waiting-maid, bade her unlock his great oaken sea-chest and bring his medicine.

Francis Marion's eyes still kept their strange brilliance, his lips were parched, and his cheek glowed with the flush of disease.

Captain Roget's prophecy was fulfilled, but had the youth been in his own home he could scarcely have received more assiduous care.

When he awoke from the fantasies of delirium he was half inclined to think that his brain was still haunted by the imagery of disease, everything seemed so strange, so unreal.

He was reclining in the ladies' cabin of the *Queen of the Sea*, which Basil Roget had fitted up with oriental luxury for his daughter.

The polished panels, the rich gilding, and graceful arabesques, the mosaic floor, the mirrors, with their elaborate frames; the silver candelabra, with their gleaming tapers; the marble slab, which served as a table, with its crystal vases, and light work-basket; the gorgeous divan, and the *fautuil* he occupied; the guitar resting on a heap of cushions; the fall of drapery, sweeping back to reveal an image of the Virgin, an ebony cross, and an embroidered hassock, contrasted strikingly with the primitive simplicity of Marion's home, and it is no wonder that the youth gazed around him in the utmost surprise.

Languidly Marion had lifted his head from the soft pillow, to cast an inquiring glance on these unfamiliar objects, but it was not till he perceived the tall figure of Basil Roget, and the face of the girl whom he had seen peering down at him on the memorable day of his rescue, that he realized his position.

"My boy," said the captain, advancing to him, "so you know me?"

"Yes, yes—I cannot mistake—you are the captain of the vessel which picked up our poor castaways the seventh day after the wreck of the Rover."

"And this girl," and Roget laid his hand proudly on his daughter's head—"have you ever seen her?"

"Yes, she was looking over the gunwale to watch us, and we had a few moments' converse when I gained the deck."

"I am glad that you are beginning to have a clear memory again, for, as I predicted, you have had fever, and been delirious for more than a week."

"Oh, sir, I fear I have been a great trouble to you."

"No, no," cried Adrienne, springing forward, "do not say that; my father and I would do three times as much to serve you—would we not, *mon père*?"

"Yes, child, and perhaps I ought to tell our friend what a brave, patient, faithful nurse you have been, not even allowing *Hortense* to take your place."

"Come, and let me thank you," exclaimed Marion, but the girl shrunk back shy and silent, blushing she knew not why.

The captain smiled, and winding his arms around her, drew her to the *fautuil*, while the youth clasped her hand and murmured:

"Francis Marion will not soon forget you, *mademoiselle*."

"Marion—Francis Marion," said the girl—"the name is French, father, and our language falls readily from his lips."

"Yes, I'm French by birth; my ancestors were exiled from France about the time of the Huguenot massacre, for having embraced the Protestant faith."

Adrienne grew a shade paler as she rejoined:

"Holy Mary forbid that you should be a heretic, Francis," while the captain observed:

"You must do your best to make a good Catholic of him before we reach the Bermudas."

Once more Adrienne Roget blushed, and gliding into her little oratory, drew down the rich curtain, and flinging herself before the crucifix, besought pardon for having felt so keen an interest in the young heretic.

CHAPTER II.

I arise from dreams of thee,
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.

TIME rolled on, and Adrienne Roget daily found herself in the companionship of the young castaway. He was always a welcome guest in her luxurious cabin, and she never could refuse him when he begged her to take her guitar and sing to his low accompaniment, or play a game of chess, to while away the hours during which the heat of day rendered it impossible for him to remain long on deck. Together they at nightfall ascended the companion way, and gazed at those glorious stars, spangling the blue sky above; watched the bright, phosphorescent track, which sometimes followed the wake of the ship, and leaned over the gunwale to catch an occasional glimpse of the spangles and sea-weed, growing below in haunts where the mermaid might bind up her long hair, or the fabled Syren lure the infatuated mariner to ruin by her strange melody.

One evening, when Adrienne entered her cabin, she found her father awaiting her. The face, reflected by the little oval mirror, was all aglow; never had the rounded cheeks been so crimson, never had the eyes danced with such light, never had the lips dimpled with such smiles.

"Come here, child," he exclaimed, as her footstep sounded on the carpet, and looking proudly at her, he continued:

"You grow more and more beautiful every day, and, by my faith, I don't wonder the society of a girl like you reconciles young Marion to his shipwreck and the sickness he has had since he came aboard *La Reine du Mer*!"

Adrienne blushed, and her father went on:

"I see how it is—you're in love, child."

For an instant the girl seemed perplexed by the charge, and then she said, with a toss of her restless little head, and a gleam of merriment in her saucy eyes:

"Not with the person you once chose for me, your first mate, *mon père*."

The captain could not repress a laugh as he resumed:

"*Parbleu!* you cannot say the same of the cast-away."

"There were six wrecked sailors," exclaimed the girl—"I certainly am not in love with all of them."

"You know as well as I what I mean; you can refuse no favour Francis Marion asks at your hands, and you are beginning to neglect me."

"Are you jealous?" and those dancing eyes were lifted searchingly to his face.

"I should be a fool to confess it if I were," rejoined Roget—"but with all your dexterity and tact, and changing your compass, you can't delude your old father. Is your heart as free as it was when I spied the castaways through my glass? Answer me truly, for I am in earnest, Adrienne, and you know me too well to trifle with me, when I am in a serious mood, and ask an honest reply."

The girl sank at his feet, and while the colour came and went, and her whole frame thrilled with a world of new emotions, said, brokenly:

"I—I do not, cannot deny that I am exceedingly interested in Francis; I have seen far handsomer men walk your vessel's deck, and at home, but there is something about his face which has a strange charm for me. I liked him when I saw him sailing the side of our vessel, and in the few moments we stood talking together. I have been much in his society since then, and—and while he is brave enough to satisfy you he can be as gentle and courteous as the knights I have read about in the romances *Hortense* brought on board."

The girl paused for an answer, but Captain Roget did not speak, and she resumed:

"If it were not for two thoughts I should be perfectly happy."

And a change settled on the bright young face.

"And what are they, my daughter?"

"There may be a curse upon me if I fall in love with a heretic."

"And the other?"

"Whether you may disapprove."

Once more Basil Roget laughed—a laugh which rang long and loud through the cabin, and then he threw back the dark tresses which had fallen over the girlish brow, and said:

"Adrienne, if I had felt any objections I should have expressed them before to-night, and not allowed this constant companionship. He has not my first mate's bag of doubloons and ingots, nor his broad acres in the tropics, but I have sat and heard him talk till I knew he had the right stuff. Francis is daring enough to suit my taste, as you suppose, and as to his religion love will make a proselyte of him, I'll be sworn."

There was a brief silence, during which the girl's

countenance brightened with hope and joy; but finally her father asked, in a low, earnest tone:

"Has Francis Marion ever talked to you of love?"

"No, mon père."

"Thus far he has acted honourably, and his very silence is only an evidence that he fears he may not meet a return."

At this juncture the panelled door unclosed, and a swarthy face appeared, while a deep-toned voice exclaimed:

"Captain, the man at the masthead has spied a sail!"

Roget sprang to his feet, and was about to leave the room, when Adrienne flung her arms around him, and said:

"Francis Marion does not yet know the whole truth?"

"No, no; keep him in ignorance till I unseal your lips, or mine, child, which may be better adapted to our purpose."

The next moment he was gone, and ere long stood, glass in hand, gazing through the clear tropical moonlight, which bathed the waters with almost the light of day, towards the distant horizontal line. Standing thus eager and expectant, with some secret hope at his heart, Basil Roget seemed to undergo a sudden transformation, and was no longer the genial man who had been so companionable for young Marion, and had just sat gaily chatting with Adrienne.

His athletic form appeared to dilate and expand; his broad chest heaved; his lips lost their cheery smile, and his whole face grew stern and full of reckless daring. As he dropped his glass, the second mate approached and said:

"Well, captain, I have been every moment expecting to hear the order, 'Make all sail—give chase!'"

"*Sacré!* you won't hear that order yet. I never give it till I am sure of the game, and I don't wish to encounter a Spanish man-of-war!"

"And do you think this is one, captain?"

"I fear so, but she's far off, on the very horizon, and I can't make her out distinctly. I shall watch and wait till morning, and you, Datchet, tell the man aloft to keep a good look-out."

Datchet obeyed; the crew were each on the alert, and thus the night wore away. When the flush of dawn reddened the East and stole over the waters Captain Roget was still at his post; his face had grown a shade paler, and a wrathful gleam shot into his eyes as he muttered:

"There's no chance for us but in flight; Hortense told the truth, when at the last port, where we ventured to drop anchor, she heard three Spanish brigantines were in hot pursuit of the Queen of the Sea. That is one of the villainous crafts, and I believe the two others are just visible, bearing down upon us, like an eagle in search of its prey."

While he had been speaking he had been joined by both the mates, and a brief but spirited discussion ensued. Few vessels could compare with their own in point of speed, but that was not to be their only dependence.

"The sail described by the man aloft during the night was nothing less than a Spanish brigantine," exclaimed the captain, "but 'twill be strange if La Reine du Mer does not soon leave them far behind! Make all sail—make all sail, and run up another flag, boys—quick, quick!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the reply which came ringing up from the fore-castle, and away danced the Queen of the Sea, like a bird skimming the waves.

The commander of the brigantine perceived the false colours flaunting at the flag-staff, but muttered:

"Ah! 'tis vain to attempt to deceive me by such arts—I know my prey, and I will have it ere the sun sets over the waters; they may lead me a long chase, but if I see they are likely to escape I will pour in a broadside they will not relish, I fancy!"

With these words he proceeded to give his orders, and with all sails set commenced the chase. On, on, on danced La Reine du Mer, leaping from wave to wave with graceful ease, and on, on floated the brigantine in pursuit. That day put the speed of Basil Roget's vessel to a severe test, and as night began to close in, dark and tempestuous, the commander of the brigantine began to fear he should lose the prize, and as a last resort sent a shower of cannon-balls towards the craft still scudding before the wind.

The shock of the concussion made the vessel reel, and sent shattered spars flying in all directions, but Basil Roget was as familiar with every inlet and point of retreat as with the features of his own daughter's face, and in the darkness of the tropical tornado his craft eluded its pursuers.

And Adrienne—what of her? During that day's trial her young heart sank, and at length the young castaway heard her voice hoarsely calling:

"François, François!"

Descending the companion way from the deck, where he had stationed himself to watch the pursuit,

he moved to the cabin. As he entered she sprang to meet him, murmuring:

"I could stay alone no longer—this suspense is killing me!"

"It is to me a striking but a painful scene," observed the young man.

"Do you think they will overtake us?" queried the girl, lifting her troubled eyes to his with a look, whose full meaning he could not yet fathom.

"It is impossible to tell," replied Marion, gravely, "but your father and his men are doing everything in their power to escape."

"Hut!" cried Adrienne, "what was that? The brigantine is not cannonading us, I hope," and her little figure shook from head to foot.

Francis Marion listened attentively for a time, and then said:

"Methinks 'tis the roar of thunder, for when I came down the sky was cloudy, and the lightning had begun to flash. But you had better prepare yourself for the worst; Captain Roget has been for hours fearful of a broadside from the brigantine."

The next instant the dreaded balls came hurtling through the air, and made the vessel reel like a mere toy at the sport of the waves.

Adrienne did not speak, but with a convulsive shudder nestled closer to the young man's side.

Her fears thrilled the youth with compassion, and he spoke as kindly as he would have done to a sister, murmuring:

"Take heart, take heart; do not tremble so."

"We are lost!" moaned the girl, with white lips and a ghastly face, and involuntarily she began to count the beads of her rosary, and breathe prayers for her father, herself, and the young castaway at her side.

For an hour the two remained thus, waiting to know their fate, and yet dreading to hear.

No other storm of shot swept across the heaving waters, and only the crash of thunder, the howl of the wind, and the tramp of busy feet on deck could be heard.

Finally, however, a footstep sounded near, and bounding forward, Adrienne was clasped to her father's heart.

The dim light flickering over the cabin, revealed his face flushed with triumph, and his heavily bearded lip curled with an exulting smile as he said:

"The chase is ended; we have completely baffled our pursuers, and by morning many a league will separate us. Spain must learn that her brigantines are no match for the Queen of the Sea. Come, come, young man, after such a day of anxiety and toil we ought to have a glass or two of the best Cognac. There, Adrienne, child, go to your berth and forget all your dismal hours in sleep."

As he spoke, he repeatedly kissed her, and drawing Francis Marion's arm within his own, led him into his cabin.

The table was no longer strewn with books and charts, but upon its polished surface stood a silver basket, filled with tropical fruits, tankards and goblets, and two or three flasks.

"Sit down," said the captain, affably.

Roget stationed himself at the head of the table, and motioned Marion to a seat at his side.

The young man silently accepted it, and Roget exclaimed:

"By my faith, when we have been obliged to strain every nerve to escape the villainous fire of a Spanish man-of-war, we deserve a glass of something stronger than water. Let us see if the Liquors of La Reine du Mer equal her speed. Ho, there, Antoine—we need your services," and he gave a shrill whistle.

As it echoed through the ship, a slight, graceful Quadroon lad appeared, and with the utmost alacrity proceeded to uncork the flasks. Roget filled his own, and his mates followed his example, but Francis Marion's stood empty, and the flask at his side untouched.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the captain, "what means this?"

"I never take brandy, sir."

"Perhaps you prefer wine, and there are the choicest ones France produces in the wine-chest."

"Excuse me," observed the young castaway, quietly, "but I do not use stimulants of any kind."

"A boyish idea, my lad, but you are old enough to abandon it now; come, let me fill your glass! All the young men will laugh at you, if you are thus squeamish."

"Then they must laugh at my expense, Captain Roget, for I am firm," and rising, he bowed gravely, and retired with the same spirit he afterwards evinced in those hours that "tried men's souls," and put his valour and principles to the test.

He was not again molested during the night, but when he had retired to his hammock he could hear, in occasional lulls of the tempest, the clinking of glasses, with now and then a snatch of some wild sea-song.

CHAPTER III.

My soul with treachery ne'er had part;
Thou know'st, great treasure, thou,
That what is written on my heart
Is written on my brow.

A WEEK subsequent to the fruitless pursuit by the Spanish galleon, as Francis Marion one morning went on deck, he was astonished and delighted to perceive that the vessel was rapidly nearing land. To his right the volcano of Horra Dura loomed up like some grand old altar, on which the sun burned with a golden fire; on the other hand might be seen a cape, unknown to him; and islands lay clustered about, glowing with gorgeous bloom, or clothed only with low shrubs, whose roots are said to be enwoven with pearls.

As the young man gazed wonderingly at the scene Roget joined him, and turning towards him, he said:

"Can these be the Bermudas?"

The captain shook his head and replied:

"No, young man."

"What then?—you see I am not an old mariner like yourself, and familiar with half the ports in the world."

"This is the Gulf of Nicoya, and yonder you behold Costa Rica."

Marion started, and fixing a keen gaze on Roget, returned:

"I do not understand you, sir; when you took us on board, and more than once since, you have told us your vessel was a merchant ship, bound for the Bermudas."

Again Basil Roget drew up his tall figure as he had done on the memorable morning when he had espied a distant sail, and a baleful gleam shot into his dark, restless eyes.

"Marion," he retorted, "perhaps it is best you should know the whole truth: I call my craft a merchant vessel whenever it suits my convenience, and land at that port which I consider the safest. We are lawless rovers, cruising from sea to sea, from shore to shore, and my men owe no allegiance but mine."

The young man grew deadly pale, and his voice was hollow and unnatural when he rejoined:

"You are, then, a pirate captain—your vessel is a pirate ship."

"You are right, and you can therefore imagine how much we dread the sight of a man-of-war."

There was a long silence, broken by the rapid footsteps of Francis Marion as he paced the deck, and the fragment of a song, sung by the busy Quadroon. At length the captain laid his hand heavily on his arm, and continued:

"My lad, keep what I have told you a secret till to-night; do not breathe it to your five messmates, who were wrecked with you, till I call you all to a private conference in my own cabin."

Marion assented, and willed away the hours in thought, watching the novel features of the landscape. As the vessel glided onward he could see the inner harbour, dotted with piraguas and bungaloes; the unfamiliar flags floating from the tall masts of foreign crafts, and the tiled roofs, the towers and spires of the town beyond. Still farther, he perceived bold mountain-peaks, empurpled with the soft, dreamy haze of that tropical atmosphere, and dense forests, with their royal palms, and other trees as stately and as strange.

So the day dragged by, and more than one vessel, with all her sails set, skimmed past like a sea-bird, while quaint piraguas, laden with bananas, coconuts and oranges, came alongside.

Roget's sailors descended to talk with the dark-browed occupants.

Gradually the light faded from sea and sky; the vesper chimes rang from the church towers, and the long tropical twilight lapsed into night.

There was no early moon, but the stars burned like silver lamps, and in their soft radiance mountain, island, and ocean presented a new charm.

Francis Marion was standing silent on deck, when Antoine advanced, and said:

"The captain wishes to see you below—not in mademoiselle's cabin, but his own."

Scarcely knowing what he did, the young man followed the boy, and soon found himself in Roget's presence.

His messmates who had belonged to the crew of the Rover were already there, and after a hasty greeting the captain exclaimed:

"Before we cast anchor I wish to explain what may have seemed mysterious in my conduct. It is now time to throw off the mask, and tell you that the Queen of the Sea is a piratical craft, and I a pirate chief! Perhaps we might have gone to the Bermudas under the guise of a French merchantman, but the appearance of the Spanish brigantine, the long chase which ensued, and the heavy broadside we received, obliged us to change our course, and though our ship has been somewhat crippled by the cannon-balls

and cannot be put to her greatest speed, here we are in the Gulf of Nicoya, the harbour of the villainous, old town of Bunta Arevas. We have run up Spanish colours; we know how to speak Spanish, and therefore we are saved!"

It is impossible for me to give any idea of the scene which ensued; the faces of the listeners flushed and paled by turns, and while three, like Francis Marion, shrank back in disgust, two laughed heartily at the ruse that had been played, and expressed their pleasure at their escape from the brigantine.

"*Mes amis*," resumed Roget, "as captain of this craft, I have a proposal to make."

"And what is it?"

"When you are better acquainted with us you will see what treasures we have amassed in our bold life upon the sea, and I now offer you a chance to join us. Gold is our principal aim, and we do not resort to harsh measures unless driven to do so by a sturdy resistance. What say you—shall I enroll your names on my list of brave men?"

Francis Marion sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"Captain Roget, I scorn you, and your calling, as I spurn your offer—I will never, never be a pirate, so help me heaven!" and he raised his hand to heaven with a solemnity which must have touched a less hardened heart.

"I say the same," cried a messmate, with his cheek flushing as he spoke.

"And I too," observed a third; "it would have been better to have perished from hunger and thirst than to be a pirate."

Again that peculiar whistle rang through the ship, and the next moment a dozen armed men appeared.

"Bind these ungrateful lads, and see that they are kept secure!" cried Roget, angrily.

"Aye, aye, sir!" and seizing the trio, they dragged them away, and thrust them rudely into their own prison in the hold.

When they had gone Roget turned towards the others with his blandest smile, and bidding Antoine bring flasks and goblets, sat with them late into the night, drinking and endeavouring to lure them on to ruin.

Eight bells had struck ere he sauntered into his daughter's cabin.

The lamp, filled with perfumed oil, burned dimly; the guitar was silent; no girlish figure crouched on the velvet cushions; but as he glanced into a little oratory, he perceived Adrienne kneeling before the crucifix.

"My child," he murmured, and the next instant she was at his side, wreathing her arms around him, and pressing her lips to his.

"Adrienne," he continued, "it is late for you to be awake."

"Yes, *mon père*, thrice I have laid my head upon my pillow, but I could not sleep."

"And why—what troubles my daughter?"

"Pray, father, how do you know that aught troubles me?" and she tried to force a smile.

"I read it in your white, anxious face, and even your smile is hollow and unnatural, not in the least like the saucy little Adrienne who has set bold Captain Roget at defiance."

As he spoke a sudden tide of crimson bathed cheek, neck and brow, and a gush of passionate tears rained from those dark eyes.

"Oh, my father!" she sobbed, "I wish we could have lived on just as happily as we did when the castaways first came on board your vessel, and our voyage lasted years instead of days. Holy Mary! what would I not give if he could have been kept in perpetual ignorance of your real character and calling!"

"*Sacré!*" growled Roget, "that was impossible, and besides, I had it in view when I rescued them from death; I thought with this claim to their gratitude I could more readily induce them to join my band, which needs replenishing, since we were obliged to leave two of our men at the little port, where we took in water, sick with the cholera."

Adrienne shuddered, as she recalled the hour when they had been thrust into one of the ship's boats, and the forlorn gaze they had lifted to her father when *La Reine du Mer* went dancing over the sea. Captain Roget seemed displeased at the emotion aroused by the painful memories which rose before her, and exclaimed:

"You must be braver, child; a pirate's daughter should have steady nerves, and a strong will, and you must now put out all your strength."

"Why, *mon père*?"

"I have a disclosure to make, which may astonish and startle you; I have to-night revealed to the six castaways the fact that the Queen of the Sea is a pirate ship, and her captain offered them a chance to make their fortunes!" Basil Roget's brow knit, and he hoarsely muttered an oath.

"Oh, father! you need tell me no more; I knew what was going on, and concealed myself where I

could listen, and remained till a deadly faintness forced me to retreat."

"And you saw and heard Francis Marion's scornful face and solemn oath never to be a pirate!"

"Yes; and then I stole away, giddy and faint, and crept into my cabin. I could not call Hortense—I wished to be alone, and how long I lay here on the carpet I cannot tell. At last I rose and gained strength to reach my little oratory, where I knelt, counting my beads till Antoine came in and told me you had put François, Fairfax and Hollis in irons, and thrust them down into the dark cells in the hold. Then I sprang up, and declared that I would go and demand their release, but Antoine kept me back, and said he captain was in no mood to allow even my interference. So the one way for me was to kneel here, and keep on praying. There is one thing that is harder to bear than all the rest."

"What is it, prithee?"

"The thought that though I have lavished my love on François Marion, he may scorn a pirate's daughter—oh, *mon père*! his terrible," and a long shudder crept through her frame.

"You do not scorn my calling as he does?"

The girl hesitated an instant, ere she replied:

"I have often wished it were different, for your life is full of dangers, but you are my father—I love you, and must make the best of it. You told me you liked François Marion—"

"I like him still," interposed the pirate—"I admire his spirit more than ever; he has the true mettle to follow my calling, but I must assert my authority to bring him to reason. Fear not! your love dreams will be realized—you will be his bride yet, and he will be a pirate chief, and succeed to my command when I have sailed my last voyage, and my gold has reared a shrine, where daily masses will be said for the repose of Basil Roget's soul!"

The girl trembled, and her father went on:

"Adrienne, you are disheartened to-night, but I am older and wiser than you, and understand human nature better. In a year I predict that Marion, like two of his messmates, will be a member of my band, and betrothed to you; but there is another little stratagem, in which you can play a romantic part, that will endear you to the young castaway."

Adrienne lifted her eyes to him with an eager, inquiring look, and he continued:

"Listen, my daughter; you can visit the prisoners if you like, and yet it must appear to be as if by stealth. I will instruct their jailer to tell them, when speaking of you, that this is the first voyage you have taken with me, and that you do not dream your father commands a pirate ship, he having threatened to throw overboard any person who shall betray his secret. This will arouse compassion for you, and give you a deeper interest in his eyes."

Hortense, the crafty waiting-maid, had already given the young girl some lessons as a *diplomate*, and *intriguante*, and she readily assented to her father's proposal.

After forming plans for future action, and weaving the spell of love around the captive, they parted; the girl seeking her pillow to dream of conquest, and the fulfilment of the prophecy to which she had listened, while the pirate captain paced his cabin with a firm step and grim face.

"Yes," he muttered, "I have sworn it—François Marion shall be a pirate yet."

The next morning the iron door of that dismal cell in the hold was softly opened, and by the light of a dim lamp she carried young Marion perceived the slight figure of Adrienne.

She wore no gay skirt or velvet bodice, or glittering necklace, but her form was wrapped in a maize-coloured *négligée* bordered with the daintiest of white fur, and girdled at the waist by a heavy cord, its rich tassels sweeping the floor, like golden plumes.

Her face was pale, the mournful expression of her eyes, and the careless hair sweeping her shoulders, heightened her forlorn appearance. Glancing around the cell, she said, brokenly:

"It is true, then? I would not believe it till now; but, but—you are prisoners?"

"Yes, Adrienne," replied Marion, drearily.

"Why, why, is this?" and she flitted towards him, and paused at his side.

Al! that was a hard question to answer, for the three captives believed her ignorant of her father's guilt, and in their tender compassion would not have betrayed him for worlds.

"What has happened?" continued Adrienne; "why have you been thrust in here?"

At length Marion found voice to falter:

"We have been so unfortunate as to offend Captain Roget, and he has seen fit to punish us by imprisonment in the hold."

"Strange, strange," murmured Adrienne, "for you, François, have always been a great favourite with him. I do not understand it, and shall not rest till I know the cause and you are set at liberty."

"Nay, nay," continued Marion, "for though we are grateful for your kindness, I am sure none of us could allow you to brave your father's displeasure by such a course."

The girl's eyes grew misty with tears, and drawing up her slight, erect figure, she said:

"Do not try to shake my purpose, François; I shall go to Captain Roget and demand to know the truth. Perhaps he has been misinformed, and you may have secret enemies on board the vessel, and I will not sit idle, when my father has been led to such injustice."

"I fear your efforts will be in vain," observed Francis Marion, gravely.

"Do not despond, François; you have often been in my father's society, and when did you ever know him to refuse me anything I asked? Adieu! I will leave you now," and her hand fell for an instant, like a snow-flake, on Marion's head, and she added, in a low tone, which rumbled through the cell like the vibration of a wind-harp, "Be assured I shall soon return to you with glad tidings," and the fair vision glided away, casting back a long, yearning gaze at the young castaway, whom she was exerting every effort to inspire with a love equalling that which thrilled her own heart.

(To be continued.)

VOICES—WHAT THEY INDICATE.

There are light, quick, surface voices that involuntarily seem to utter the slang, "I won't do to tie to." The man's words may assure you of his strength of purpose and reliability, yet the tone contradicts his speech.

Then there are low, deep, strong voices, where the words seem ground out, as if the man owed humanity a grudge, and meant to pay it some day. The man's opponents may well tremble, and his friends may trust his strength of purpose and ability to act.

There is the coarse, boisterous, dictatorial tone, invariably adopted by vulgar persons, who have not sufficient cultivation to understand their own insignificance.

There is the incredulous tone, that is full of a covert sneer, or a secret "You can't dape me" intonation.

There is the whining, beseeching voice that says "sycophant" as plainly as if it uttered the word. It cajoles and flatters you—its words, "I love you; I admire you; you are everything you should be."

Then there is the tender, musical, compassionate voice, that sometimes goes with sharp features (as they indicate merely intensity of feeling), and sometimes with blunt features, but always with genuine benevolence.

If you are full of affection and pretence your voice proclaims it.

If you are full of honesty and strength of purpose your voice proclaims it.

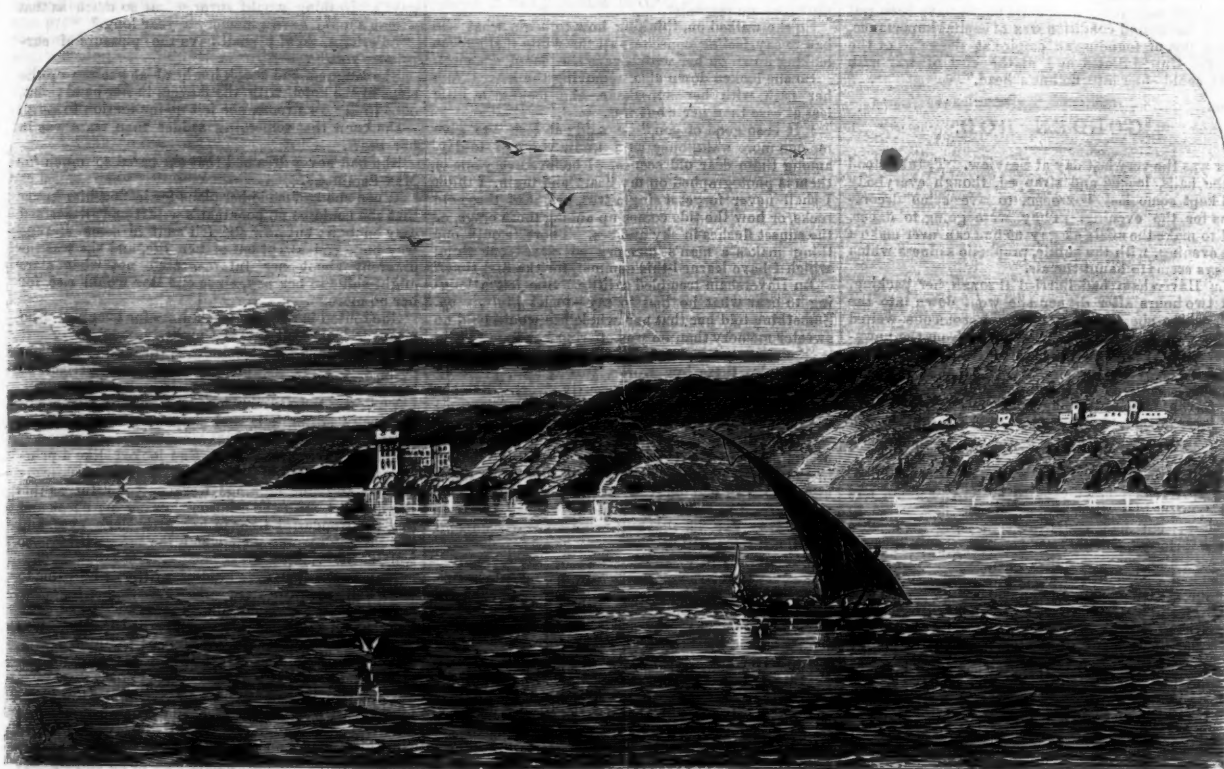
If you are cold, and calm, and firm, and consistent, or fickle, and foolish, and deceptive, your voice will be equally truth-telling.

You cannot wear a mask without its being known that you are wearing one.

You cannot change your voice from a natural to an unnatural tone without its being known that you are doing so.

BARRISTERS' FEES.—Fees of twenty shillings, according to Jofferson's "Book about Lawyers," were more generally paid to counsel under the Virgin Queen than in the days of her father; but still half that fee was not thought too small a sum for an opinion given by her Majesty's Solicitor-General. Indeed, the ten-shilling fee was a very usual one in Elizabeth's reign, and it long continued an ordinary payment for one opinion on a case, or for one speech in a cause of no great importance and of few difficulties. It must be remembered that, at that time, the wages of a labourer were 3d. to 4d. a day, and beef was 1d. to 1½d. a pound. A ten-shilling fee (temp. Hen. VIII.) was, in purchasing value at least, equal to five guineas at the present time.

PUBLICATION OF Banns.—The Bishop of Oxford asserts, says the *Solicitors' Journal*, that the publication of banns of marriage should take place in the Church service immediately after the Nicene Creed. Whether this error is adopted blindly or wilfully it ought to be authoritatively refuted—not only because from a man of such extensive learning as the bishop any statement comes with great authority, but also because an unanswered assertion of this sort tends to unsettle, in an unnecessary and hurtful manner, the minds of the public. We can only reiterate what has been already stated, namely, that the publication of banns is regulated by the Act 4 Geo. IV., c. 76, s. 2, and that the proper interpretation of that section indicates that the proper time for their publication is immediately after the second lesson.



[MIRAMAR, THE RESIDENCE OF THE EMPRESS OF MEXICO.]

THE MEXICAN QUESTION.

By Europe, and England in particular, Louis Napoleon is taunted with having, by the failure of his attempt to found a "Latin empire" in the land of Montezuma, made the only great blunder of his eighteen years of rule. That England has had much to do with this failure no one can doubt, for, without question, during the great civil war in America it entered into the French Emperor's calculation that England, with France, would recognize the South. Had this happened the state of affairs on the great continent would have had a far different aspect to that which they at present wear. Without entering upon the merits or demerits of the Monroe doctrine—in which our American cousins place such faith, and which simply means the annexation of the whole of North America—we may assert our belief that the failure of Louis Napoleon in Mexico is a catastrophe, not only to the Mexicans, but to the world.

From the moment that Cortez and his iron-clad and well-mounted followers touched the soil, and, by the assassination of millions of the Aztec race, established Spanish dominion, this unhappy land has been one continual scene of riot and bloodshed. The hybrid successors of the conquerors have never been at peace among themselves, and, with a kind of dramatic justice, a Nemesis has followed every succeeding generation; even at the present moment that beautiful valley, so magnificent that it presents almost every climate, and consequently the natural products of a world, and certainly abounds in mineral riches, and boasts a population of some seven millions, is torn asunder by civil war (and civil war among the descendants of the Conquistadors is carried on in the spirit of the Corsican vendetta), and this fresh civil war has been brought about—because with a "dog-in-the-manger" like feeling, the United States, and their government and press admit the fact, can never offer more than a protectorate power, will not permit a monarchy on their continent; albeit to this bleeding land a monarchy in this instance meant what the descendants of the Conquistadors have never been able to achieve—progress, peace, unity, authority, rigour, security, and industry. A descendant of one of these conquerors, himself a diplomatic representative at the court of St. James, and one of the great South American Republic, said to the present writer, "Alas! we have no history; no, nothing but a record, a chronicle of rapine and bloodshed;" yet once more have our American cousins brought, by their interference, this unhappy land to its *status quo* of disruption and anarchy.

Ortega, Santa Anna, Juarez, are now, at the head of their various factions, disputing for and directing that which might have become a settled and great state beneath the rule of a firmly seated government.

Whether a country could ever have become settled under a constitutional government, its head being a member of so despotic a house as that of the Hapsburgs is another question. It is, however, assuredly possible that Maximilian may have learned something by the misfortunes of his Imperial brother. But be that as it may, or rather *might* have been, it is pretty certain that the new Emperor, Maximilian (of whose government and prospects we gave an account in our article on the Mexican difficulty and Matamoros in No. 180 of THE LONDON READER), has abdicated, and is on his way back to Europe, one American paper "suspects, to assume the throne of his brother, who, disgusted with his recent reverses, is to abdicate in his favour."

Of Maximilian himself the least that can be said is that nothing is known to his discredit; having been persuaded by the Emperor of the French to accept the Imperial throne, and withal a guarantee of support, he has since well, and to the best of his power, endeavoured to fulfil his mission by consolidating and giving peace to that unhappy country.

To do that he calculated, as we have said, on the support, moral, physical and pecuniary, of France. The French people, however, were unwilling to enter upon a war with America; thus the death blow to the Austrian Archduke's hope of a Mexican empire came to him in a letter from the French Minister, January, 15, 1866, which ran as follows:

"Mexico not being able to pay the troops which we keep upon her territory, it becomes impossible for us to keep them there. As for asking fresh credit of our country with this object, I have already explained myself to you on this head. As I have told you, public opinion has pronounced with irrefragable authority that the limit was reached. France would refuse to add anything, and the Emperor would not ask it."

With the hope of averting this threatened blow, the Empress Charlotte (Carliotta) undertook a voyage to Europe. The result of that voyage is unhappily known to the whole world.

On Her Majesty's arrival at Rome she was visited by the Pope at her hotel—the "Hôtel de Rome," in the Corso. Here the soldiers of the French and the Pontifical armies took turns in guarding the entrance of the palace, and in accompanying the Empress to church and in her walks. Some days after the Pope's visit it was returned by the Empress. She

had at the Vatican a very long and important interview on the subject of Maximilian's Mexican empire. It was on the occasion of this visit that she first exhibited symptoms of the malady with which she is now afflicted. The Empress is now under the most solicitous care at her château in Miramar, near Trieste (Austria), of which we this week give an illustration.

Thus, unhappily, nay, in direct misery, has ended the attempt of the Arch-Duke Maximilian to found a Mexican empire, saddest of all being the terrible disease of the brain with which it has pleased heaven to afflict his wife. The amiable, accomplished, and beautiful, but unfortunate Carliotta, is sister to the present and daughter of the late King of the Belgians, and was named after King Leopold's first wife, our Princess Charlotte of Wales, daughter of George IV.

By way of conclusion, let us add that the influential French newspaper, *Le Journal des Débats*, taking the same view we have given as to the real cause of the fall of the Mexican empire, says:

"The fate of the empire has already been decided, and one may say with truth that if the abdication of Maximilian only dates from yesterday, the *real date* of his fall goes back much farther. The capture of Atlanta and Charleston, and the fall of Richmond mark his real fall; and before, even, one might almost have read this fall between the lines of the dispatches by which England and Russia refused to join the French Government in proposing a mediation and an armistice between the North and South. The miscarriage of the Mexican enterprise rests, therefore, on the two errors of judgment which gave it birth."

The same journal, repudiating the accusation against the French people that they, by undue pressure, forced the Emperor Napoleon into breaking his understood contract with Maximilian, farther says:

"Instead of accusing the nation of weakness when, after all, it has only counselled and approved a retreat so necessary that it would have been made in spite of public opinion, if it had been blind enough to blame it, why not admit that the Mexican enterprise rested on two opinions which have been proved by events to be incorrect? The first was that the great majority of the Mexican population must regard with pleasure the establishment of a new throne, and that the malcontents could be subjected without any great effort; the second and most important for the future of the enterprise was that the American Union was irrevocably broken up, and that the South would get the best of it over the North, and serve as a barrier to the new empire. Such were the two conditions *mis en scène* of the success of the enterprise; but while the

first was subsidiary, in the sense that with time, blood, and money, the dissidents might have been put down, the second condition was of capital importance, as the idea of founding an empire at the gates of the restored United States, and at the cost of war with them, could enter into no one's head."

GOLDEN ROD.

It was the very last day at Seaview. Trunks stood in the halls, locked and strapped, though everybody had kept some last box open, to save some decorations for the evening. They were going to dance, and to make the affair as gay as one can ever make a last evening, with the subtle, prophetic sadness which always seems to haunt the air.

Lu Haversham had hurried through her packing, and two hours after dinner she went down into the hall, where she knew well enough someone waited for her. A handsome man looked up from the newspaper he was making pretence of reading, when he heard her foot on the stairs, and came forward to meet her. A great, noble-looking fellow he was, with his Saxon face, clear blue eyes, fair curling hair, and lips that could be firm and proud enough, though just now their expression was winningly gentle and tender.

Max Pembroke was a man whom all women liked. Miss Haversham had meant to be an exception, and had treated him distantly when she first came to Seaview; but had ended by something little more than a flirtation, a little less, perhaps, than a love affair with him.

She had a good deal of worldly wisdom. She knew that she needed money, and had no certain prospect of any. Her uncle had brought her up as liberally and elegantly as if she had been his own daughter, but if he should die to-morrow she was not sure of money enough to buy her gloves. He might have willed her something, or he might not. He had never told her, and she knew to make a brilliant marriage had been the object and end of her social training, the one thing her Uncle and Aunt Haversham expected of her in return for all their outlay in her behalf.

It was a strange oversight on their part which had allowed her to come to Seaview, and be left there to her own devices. Mrs. Haversham had been in mourning for her sister, and, of course, out of society. She did not care to let her niece go to any very gay place without her; and, just as they were settling their plans, some friends had begged for Miss Haversham's company at Seaview, and her aunt and uncle had consented.

To be sure, they might have been justified in trusting something to the common-sense of their niece. Lu was twenty, and had already proved herself to be anything but an easily impressed young woman; and then she had been well instructed as to what the other contracting party in any matrimonial compact she might form was expected to bring. Miss Haversham was accustomed to reason about it very coolly and clearly.

"If I had anything," she used to say to herself, "marrying for love would be all very well. I would rather give a man a fortune than take one from him; but we all know people can't live on air, and there must be money on one side or the other. So it's very evident I can't afford the luxury of falling in love with a poor young man."

She had known from the first that Max Pembroke was poor—that he had nothing but his old name, his handsome face, and fascinating manner, and a certain amount of talent for drawing, which always made his illustrations in demand, and on the proceeds of which he lived; for the last of his patrimony had been expended by the time his education was finished and he had established himself in his art.

This knowledge that he was not matrimonially eligible, and the other fact that so many women raved about him, had, as I said, made her very distant towards him at first, and she was utterly at a loss as to what had brought about the change, and established their more than friendly relations. She knew well enough that he meant to ask her before they parted for some pledge of constancy, and she had settled her own course in her mind.

She did not ask herself how much she cared about him, or whether she were likely ever to care as much for anyone else. She preferred to keep these points out of sight, and consider only the manifest impossibility of marrying without the means to supply the demands of fashionable life, and she had never thought, in those days, of any other kind of life as possible.

So she had a purpose this afternoon. She meant to make him see the matter as she did, and she meant to make him see it before he had subjected himself to the pain of hearing, or her the pain of saying "no."

She nodded gaily as she met him, and said a few merry words as they went down the steps together;

but he was in no lively mood, and her gay sallies provoked no rejoinder.

So she walked on, thinking how to begin what she had to say, feeling conscious all the while that he was looking down on her with a gaze she dared not meet.

So she looked down also, removing the leaves from her path with her sun-shade, and feeling a little less at ease than her wont was.

"It is so good of you," she said; at last, "to give me one more walk, busy as I know you are to-day, among these dear old scenes. I believe every one of them is photographed on my heart and brain. I think I shall never forget a single tree, or one of these old rocks, or how the tide comes up among those crags, or the sunset flushes in sky and sea. There is only one thing makes a man's memory so clear—one thing which I have learned this summer, for the first time."

Lu Haversham trembled a little. She felt a longing to hear what he had to say—to let him go on. Something told her that her whole life would hold no sweeter memory than he was offering her then.

She must have cared for him more than she had known, else these low words, this tender, pleading tone, would not be so dangerously sweet. But she had mapped out her course beforehand, and she would not be lured away from it by any false lights.

"Don't be sentimental," she said; "it is not at all becoming, and this time there was something hollow in the gaiety of her tone. "Don't you know sentiment is out of fashion? I, at least, was brought up to look on it as forbidden fruit. Of course I mean to marry some day, but that will be an affair of common-sense, not sentiment."

"What do you mean?"

Max Pembroke's voice was low, and a little hoarse. There was an earnestness in it which compelled the truth to her lips. She answered him as frankly as she would have acknowledged the facts to her own soul.

"Nearly what I say. Not that I despise sentiment, but that I am too poor to indulge in it. I have nothing of my own. When I marry it will be a man rich enough to give me all that I have been accustomed to. I shall not be a happier woman, or make my chosen lord a better wife, for having talked sentiment with you under the trees at Seaview."

He stopped, right in the path where they were walking, and took both her hands in his.

"Look at me," he said, almost sternly.

She looked up at him, her dark cheeks crimson, her great brown eyes telling him what she meant he should never know, her lips tempting him with the ripe sweetness another man's money was to buy some day.

"If it were not for this—this worldly wisdom, this cursed prudence, you would have loved me," he said, after he had read the story in her eyes. "Very well—I shall not envy the man who will be your husband. I would not exchange with him."

"Your words are not choice," she said, with an indignant tone and glance, but at the same time a gripped quiver of lip and eyelash.

He released her hands and bowed courteously.

"If I forgot myself, pardon me, Miss Haversham. It will not happen again."

Then he commenced talking about other subjects; the foliage beginning to change; the autumn flowers along the paths; some illustrations he was making for a book of poems; the people they had met at Seaview; steering clear, very carefully, of all dangerous themes.

Somewhat Miss Haversham had succeeded almost too well for her own pleasure.

She wished he had not understood her so quickly, or not obeyed her so readily.

She longed to hear him say, once, how well he loved her; though that was the very thing she had prevented him from saying.

She was too proud a woman, however, to take any steps backward; besides, she understood perfectly that she had done the only wise thing.

So she seconded his attempts at talking about indifferent matters, and grew all the time more vexed to see how easily he seemed to find it.

On the way home he gathered a handful of golden rod, selecting carefully the richest and fullest blossoms.

"Will you wear some of these to-night?" he asked her. "The flower should suit you, for there is no sentiment about it, and its name suggests the quality which most commends an object to your taste. I want to see how this splendid orange will look in your dark hair."

"Yes, I will wear them," she said, putting out her hand for the blossoms. "I like them—they are royal. I wonder who will gather golden rod for me next year?"

"I will, if I am alive, and you are not married."

She had made the remark in a half-pensive strain, not expecting any answer, and his words, so earnestly spoken, half startled her.

"You will forget," she said, trying to be carelessly gay. "Nothing would surprise me so much as that a man should have a memory a year long."

"Perhaps, then, I shall have the pleasure of surprising you."

She laughed, and shook her head as she ran up the steps of the hotel, with the flowers in her hand; but, once in her own room, she felt no inclination to laugh—she knew that something sadder than tears was in her heart.

She had never dreamed that she cared so much for Max Pembroke.

When she had made her plans for letting him know that she could be no poor man's wife it had all seemed easy enough; but now she felt as if in some strange way hope had swept out of her life, and she was indifferent about her future—cared not what stars might shine in her sky, since one star would rise for her no more.

She roused herself at last to dress for evening. She meant to look well this last night.

She put on a thin black dress, through which her neck and arms gleamed, polished and perfect as marble.

Then she twisted the long sprays of golden rod in her heavy falling hair, and shaped the wreath like a coronet above her brow.

The effect was striking. She looked like a princess with a crown of dusky gold, if ever the descendant of any line of kings were as beautiful as this English girl, with the crimson staining her cheek and lips, the wonderful light in her great dark eyes, and the dusky, drooping hair which the brown became so well.

Max Pembroke's eyes kindled a little as he came to meet her.

She was a surprise to him.

Beautiful as he had always thought her, there was about her that night a queenlier grace, a subtler charm. But he said nothing. It was not his way to pay compliments except with his eyes.

He kept close beside her, however, the entire evening, danced with no one else, and people began—just now when the matter was all settled between the two most interested, and the flirtation, if you do not care to call it by any better name, was at an end—to say how desperately matters were going on between Miss Haversham and Pembroke. Really things were at last beginning to look serious.

It was midnight when Lu went upstairs, and she went with some words that Pembroke had been singing, ringing in her ears:

My heart is heavy, my heart is cold,
And that proves dross which I counted gold;
I watch no longer your curtain's fold—
The window is dark, and the night is cold,
And the story for ever told.

Was the story for ever told? Had she lost something she would seek for vainly and with tears some day?

She looked out of her window towards the sea that lay tossing beneath the September moon. She had chosen her room for this same glimpse of that wide waste of waters.

It meant eternity to her, because it stretched away into a boundless mystery which seemed infinite. It had preached her sermons subtler and more searching than any preacher's voice would ever utter. Her worldly aims, her petty cares of this life, always shrank into insignificance when she looked from that window.

Looking out now, it seemed to her as if this world were finished to her, and standing on the shore of some other life, she could measure calmly what she had done in this. And she asked herself had she done well?

There might be greater men in the world than Max Pembroke, and better men, possibly, but she had lived more than twenty years without ever finding one whose heart made answer to her heart as she knew that his might.

She felt, without him, a curious sense of incompleteness. She knew there were things she could say to him that she should never say to anyone else. Gay, handsome fellow that he was, she knew his nature was honest, and fearless, and reverent—that he looked towards eternity with an unshrinking gaze, a heart full of hope and of worship—and she longed for his hand to hold hers, his strength to sustain her weakness, when she should go down into the valley of shadows, and drift out on the unknown sea.

She felt there might have been between them the bond of an eternal love, and she had sacrificed it for this world's mess of potage.

From the unquiet, shimmering sea a voice seemed to come whispering, as he had sung, of a "story for ever told"—her life's story, of which she had made a failure so soon.

At last she felt the damp chill of the night penetrating her veins, saturating her garments. She got up and shut her window.

Shutting out the white moon and rising sea, she seemed to have shut out with them part of her pain. She grew more hopeful. After all, what she had done need not be final. She would see him again the next morning.

She could not ask him to call on her in town; and the coming winter would give her chances enough, if she wanted them, to show him that she had changed her mind.

But did she want them?

Now that she had turned away from her preacher she began to grow worldly again; and to wonder if there were anything in love which would make up for the sacrifice of three-fourths of the things which she had been brought up to think necessary to her happiness? She would go to sleep, and let the future answer.

She went down to a late breakfast the next morning.

Her train did not go till eleven, and she finished her packing, and put on her travelling gear before she left her room.

"So Pembroke is gone?"

She heard someone ask this question as she went downstairs, and she felt her heart stand still while she waited for the answer.

"Pembroke? Yes. He said he had business to see to which wouldn't let him wait for the late train; so he was off at eight o'clock."

She was thankful that she had heard the news, and got over the spasm it caused her when no investigating eyes were taking note of her.

When she got downstairs and joined the group at the door she was able to hear the same tidings over again quite unmoved, and answer gaily, as her wont was, to all salutes about him.

She had not been back in town more than three weeks before she saw in the columns of a literary paper, under the head of "Personal," an announcement that London publishers of a certain poet, desiring to issue a volume with illustrations, had arranged with Pembroke for the designs, and he had gone abroad to confer on the subject with the author, and to study the poems at his leisure among the scenes where they were written.

He was likely to remain away for some time, for he had the prospect of numerous commissions.

She either did not feel anything, or she would not let herself know what she felt.

She read the passage as she would have read a similar item about any other artist, and she went with her Aunt Haversham to do some shopping, and displayed in it more than her usual taste and skill.

She had a gay season that winter—kept herself too busy and too tired to think much.

Fortunately, in the set in which she moved, Pembroke, the artist, was little known, and there was not much danger of hearing his name mentioned.

She had one trunk into which she never looked. She had thrust into it, hurriedly, the last day of September all her tokens of Seaview—a carved box, among other things, which held the withered sprays of golden rod which had been his last gift.

Soon Miss Haversham began to see that for her there was something very special going on. She had met a few times in society, during the last winter, one Lowell Revere. He had a sense of what was due to him as a Revere, as a denizen of Beacon Hill. A fine, cool dignity pervaded his manners. You know without being told what his features were—the high cheek, the Roman nose, the dark, haughty eyes, the thin, passionless, proud lips. He was a man whom the world delighted to honour.

Miss Haversham felt this in London, where he bloomed, so to speak, as an exotic. His attentions conferred honour, like a patent of nobility; and she began unconsciously to set a higher value on herself when she found that she was singled out as their recipient.

He did not make love to her at all. For love-making, as it is generally understood, he was too cool and too dignified. But he sought no other woman's side—he drove and rode with her; and—crowning glory—his mother and sisters called on her, and showed themselves ready to make her welcome.

Mrs. Revere and her daughters were not handsome. There had been something very charming in the mother's face, long ago, when she was Fanny Lowell, but marriage and maternity, and the Revere dignity to support, had gradually worn it away, and she was as lifeless and proper now as a lay figure hung with cashmeres, and glittering at proper hours with diamonds.

Miss Revere and Miss Margaret were like their brother—like him in pride and in dignity, as well as in the haughty Roman features.

They were not of Lu Haversham's kind. She felt chilled when she sat with them in their orderly, elegant rooms, or drove with them, at sober paces, in their faultlessly well-appointed family carriage.

But if the undertaking of conforming to their ways

and keeping up to their mark were arduous, the honour of being invited to do so was proportionally great.

So she accepted their proffered courtesies, and conformed herself as well as she could to their standard. To say that her uncle and aunt were gratified would be to put it very mildly indeed. They had social tact enough not to display any undue exhilaration; but their niece, if no one else, understood perfectly their secret but exulting satisfaction.

"Has it occurred to you, my dear," said Mrs. Haversham, one day, attempting extreme dignity, "that Mr. Revere's attentions are very marked, and that you are likely soon to be obliged to answer to him the most important question of your life?"

"The importance of the question depends, I suppose, on my reply," Miss Haversham answered, perversely. "A woman's rejected suitors are not usually of any especial consequence to her future."

"Rejected!" Mrs. Haversham put up both hands, as if to ward off a blow, and a look of blank horror crossed her face. "Have you been flirting with Mr. Revere?"

"Hardly. I think the affair has been rather too cool and stately on both sides to be called a flirtation. Mr. Revere is not given to sentiment."

"Mr. Revere's attentions are an honour—an honour you will do well to estimate at its full value. How many such opportunities do you think are likely to offer themselves in the life of one girl—not an heiress, and not a great beauty, either?"

A look like steel came into Lu Haversham's eyes, but she controlled her temper perfectly as she answered:

"You have been so kind, Aunt Haversham, you and my uncle, that you have made me forget that I was poor. But do I burden you enough to make you in a hurry to marry me off, without regard to whether I love the man or hate him?"

Mrs. Haversham was kind-hearted, and a feeling of penitence took possession of her when she saw Lu's white face. She got up and kissed her.

"You are our daughter," she said, "our own daughter. You will never be a burden, if you stay with us for ever. But you cannot wonder that we want to see you do as well as possible for yourself."

Lu returned the kiss.

"I will not disappoint you if I can help it," she said, in a low, tremulous voice, and then she went out of the room.

It was the 29th of September, and old memories were haunting her like ghosts.

Just one year ago that day she had walked with Max Pembroke at Seaview, and he had gathered golden rod for her hair.

He had promised to gather it again for her this year, if she were unmarried still. Then she thought bitterly what wastes of waters rolled between them—what other tide, bitterer and yet more pathless, swept them apart.

That afternoon she drove upon the beach with Mr. Revere, and he asked her to be his wife.

His manner never varied from its cool, calm dignity. His words were admiring and respectful, rather than fervent.

If they had come yesterday she would have said yes, most likely, without farther consideration; for in this offer the very things she had coveted, the very things whose attainment she had set before herself as the one thing needful, were laid at her feet—all of them, and more.

But she had been walking, in thought, with Pembroke, among the asters and golden rod at Seaview, even while she listened to Mr. Revere's courtly words; and she could not bring herself to make him the promise he asked until this memorable day was over.

"I will tell you to-morrow," she said, when he waited for her answer. "It is a question which involves too much to be decided hastily."

And Mr. Revere, sure enough of his triumph in the end, admired her sense and dignity, and talked tranquilly about Ruskin and Turner, as they drove home through the crimson sunset.

When Miss Haversham opened the door of her room she saw a box upon her table strongly tied, and with railway labels on it.

Her heart gave a great bound. She wrenched at the cords, and tore them off.

When the cover was removed she saw a moss basket, nicely packed, filled with sprays of golden rod; and, lying on it, a little note, which she opened, and read only these words:

"I promised you a golden rod on the 29th of September, this year, if you were still unmarried. I came back from over the seas to keep my word, and show you that one man has a memory a year long."

She would have known the handwriting, even if she had not been remembering, all day, the promise which seemed so impossible of fulfilment.

Was it possible, also, that the old story had not been

"for ever told"—that for her there was still "place for repentance"?

The next morning she gave Mr. Revere an answer which surprised him.

There was a new and sweet humility in her manner which almost charmed him into forgiving her, in spite of his anger.

"I know that you will have a right to despise me," she said, after she had told him that she could not be his wife. "I know that I have given you reason to expect a different answer, and until yesterday I meant if you offered me this honour to accept it. But I have been searching my own heart, and I have found that one old memory had power enough to keep me from being to you a loyal, loving wife, and you are too noble to bear to live with any other."

Mr. Revere forbore entreaties or reproaches.

He was too proud for the one, too truly a gentleman for the other.

He did not refuse either to take the little hand put out to him so pleadingly.

He did not know it himself, but Lu Haversham had done him good.

He would have more faith in love hereafter, more respect for all women, because this one had been true to herself.

Miss Haversham went from her interview with him to one scarcely less trying with her aunt.

In it she told the truth, and the whole truth.

Mrs. Haversham found it useless to blame, as it was, to her nature, impossible to approve.

The next day she took her niece back to London.

It seemed as if some fairy kept Max Pembroke advised of Miss Haversham's movements.

She had not been at home a week before, one evening, his card was brought up to her.

She happened to be dressed as he had seen her last, in black.

She waited a moment to put the golden rod, which careful tending had kept fresh, in her hair.

Then she went down, looking again a radiant queen, whom the crown of dusky gold suited well.

When the first greetings were over he touched the blossoms in her hair.

"Did you wear them to give me courage?" he asked, looking into her eyes.

"I wore them," she said, softly, "because I loved them—because I have found they are the only gold worth a heart-beat—that the things I used to think necessary were only pleasant, not vital."

"And you are ready to do without them, and trust to me to keep warm and care away from the woman I love? Are you mine, mine?"

He was holding her close, and looking straight into her face, where the blushes burned.

She gave him a smile, in which her soul was fused like a pearl.

"If you want me, 'Yes.'"

"You shall never be sorry, while heaven gives me life to love you."

And she never has been.

L. C. M.

JAMES RATCLIFF, a City policeman, but now one of the pensioners of the City Police Fund, has come into possession of funded property to the amount of £125,000, besides an estate which realizes £3,000 per annum.

MODERN SACRIFICE.—Dr. Lankester lately told a coroner's jury that the annual number of females in England whose death was caused by burning was 3,000, and that 10,000 received severe injuries from the same cause: an awful sacrifice this on the shrine of fashion, for the greater number of these accidents of fire to women may be set down to the idol Crinoline!

MAGNIFICENT blocks of crystallized sulphur, dug at Hidvna, have arrived from Bagdad for the Paris Exhibition, with specimens of essence of petroleum, of pearls, of pit coal, and of brodered stuffs. From Mosul five species of marble, twelve specimens of minerals, several antiquities from Nineveh, and marbles from the spot called "Yournong the Prophet," with inscriptions in undeciphered hieroglyphics, have arrived. On one of these marbles there is an eagle's head, with a wing on its back. Wines, gold and silver, stuffs and carpets are expected from Diarbekir.

WOMAN.—I have always remarked (says an old traveller) that women, in all countries, are civil and obliging, tender and humane; that they are ever inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and modest; and that they do not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. Not haughty, not arrogant, not supercilious, they are full of courtesy and fond of society; more liable, in general, to err than man, but in general, also, more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. To a woman, whether civilized or savage, I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it has often been

otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, vast Russia, and the wide-spread regions of the wandering Tartar—if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me, and uniformly so. And to add to this virtue, so worthy the appellation of benevolence, their actions have been performed in so free and kind a manner that if I were dry I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry I ate the coarsest morsel, with a double relish.

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE subterranean apartment in which Oliver had passed the latter hours of the night communicated with a natural cavern, which, for ages, had been used by the lords of Hillhausen as a torture-chamber.

This place had long been disused, for the two last owners of the place had been humane women, who ordered the fearful place to be closed.

But Prince Ernest was aware of its existence, and a liberal bribe to an old retainer of the family had opened it to him on this occasion.

The cavern was irregularly shaped, and from the rude recesses that lined its walls ghastly iron instruments protruded, which had brought such anguish of body to many a tortured wretch as only ended in death.

Conspicuous among these was one more terrible than all the rest.

It was the majestic statue of a beautiful woman, with the soft and smiling beauty of a young girl in the bloom of life.

The arms of this vampire were so arranged that when the victim was forced to step upon the pedestal on which she stood they suddenly closed upon him, burying in his body innumerable daggers, which pierced his veins, and left him, held as in a vice, to bleed slowly to death with that sweet face smiling down serenely upon him, thus intensifying the torture by affording the wretched creature time to comprehend all his helplessness, all the horrors of his fate.

A table stood in the centre of the floor, and beside it, as Oliver expected, sat Prince Ernest and the baron.

In the background was a tall figure wearing a crape mask, and the man who had brought Oliver thither was disguised in a similar manner.

"Those are the torturers," he mentally groaned, and he tried to form a prayer for deliverance from the wretched strait in which he was placed, but in the bewildered state of his mind he could think of nothing save the terrible trial that awaited him.

Prince Ernest motioned towards a third seat in front of the table, and with more courtesy than he had hitherto displayed said:

"Sit down, M. Ledru, and listen carefully to what I am about to say to you. I speak in French, as it is best understood by you, and will be unintelligible to my attendants."

He paused till Oliver had seated himself, and then went on:

"My purpose in bringing you hither is not now to inquire where the child is to be found, as I am as well informed on that subject as you are. My object in gaining this interview is to impress on your mind that the letter you received from Herman by the hands of Fritz is genuine. It is necessary that it shall be shown by you to a great lady and the truth of its statements vouched for. Do you understand what is required of you?"

"I scarcely think I do, sir. Your emissary would not be likely to bring me a genuine letter from Herman, and I am afraid the one in question was manufactured for the purpose it served. I know nothing of the child concerning whom I have so often been questioned, but the news of her death, coming from such a source, I must be permitted to doubt. Had she been really dead you would not again have seized upon me in this lawless manner."

An expression of scornful anger swept over the face of Prince Ernest, but he controlled the outburst of his rage, and contemptuously replied:

"In this goodly land princes are a law unto themselves. I shall make you feel the full extent of my power, unless you prove amenable to my commands. But it is not my wish to threaten you; I would far rather reward than torture. I will leave my uncle to explain, however, for he understands the art of influencing others better than I do."

At these words the baron removed from his lips the pipe he had been lazily smoking, and the prince left his seat and walked restlessly to and fro, while, in his most mellifluous tones, the old gentleman said:

"My dear young friend, I hope that you think it the bounden duty of every man to promote matrimonial concord between those who are united for weal or woe."

Finding that he paused for a reply, Oliver presently said:

"To an abstract question like that I might perhaps reply yes, but I am at a loss to know how I am to promote the wedded felicity of anyone."

"I shall make it my business to enlighten you, monsieur. I will state the case plainly, as I wish you to have a clear comprehension of it. My nephew, there, has just married a high-strung woman who has been made to suspect that he has wilfully deceived her as to the death of the child concerning whom we have so injudiciously tormented you. Now, you can set this right, for you have the assurance from Herman's own hand that the Lady Irene is dead and buried, and all that is required of you is to declare to the Princess of Berchtholz that the letter you have in your possession was certainly written by him, and its statements can be relied on as true. Thus you will serve yourself, and preserve peace between my nephew and his wife."

Oliver listened with earnest attention, and at the close of this speech he asked:

"If I could be wrought on to bear witness to a falsehood like that, what assurance should I have that I should be permitted to go on my way safe and unharmed, after aiding you to deceive the princess?"

"You must take your chances, but faith would be kept with you. I can safely assure you of that, for the child has ceased to be a bugbear to us. She is really dead, as you will learn from Herman himself whenever he finds means to communicate with you. The Duchess of Lindorf now lies almost at the point of death, brought to that extremity by the news of her daughter's decease."

To this announcement Oliver incredulously replied:

"If this be true the Princess of Berchtholz must also be aware of it. Then why was it necessary to drag me here to confirm her belief in an event you could so easily have proved to her without me?"

"It is not necessary that I should explain to you the motives that actuated my nephew in his course towards you. This much I will say—the princess is not a reasonable person; she has heard of the child's death, but an absurd anonymous letter causes her to suspect the truth of the story, and it has become necessary to set her doubts at rest, fantastic as they may appear. The simplest method of doing this is to show her the letter from Herman, and assure her that it is genuine."

"And if I decline to do this what is to be the alternative?"

The baron motioned with his pipe towards a rack which stood dark and frowning in a recess, and composedly said:

"You will be stretched on that till your sinews strain, and if you still care more for the truth than for your own safety, you will be thrust into the embrace of that beautiful vampire, who will drain your heart's blood at her leisure."

Oliver shuddered and changed colour. He imprudently said:

"If the fate of the child were not settled, beyond a doubt you would not really risk taking my life."

"Certainly not; but since it is settled, what then, my friend? If you need that last proof of the truth of my assertions you can easily have it, for we shall no longer be tender with you on the score of the secret you were supposed to guard. That now belongs to us, and the grave of the child already has flowers growing above it. We no longer ask you where she is to be found, but require a new service at your hands for which you will be liberally rewarded. Unless it is performed you will be as severely punished. Reflect, monsieur, how serious a thing it is to find one's life or limbs of no more value than a forest twig that can be broken at will."

After a few moments of perturbed thought Oliver replied:

"If I had any assurance of ultimate escape from the snare you have spread for me I might, perhaps, consider your proposal. But if I declare the letter sent to me as from Herman to be genuine, after serving your turn, I may be quite as hardly dealt with as if I had refused."

The baron's calmness seemed suddenly to desert him, and he angrily said:

"You are a very difficult person to make terms with, M. Ledru. There are arguments at my command infinitely more potent than words, and it may be as well to try them before wasting any more breath on one as obstinate as you have already been proved."

Before Oliver could make any reply, at a sign from the baron, the two attendants moved swiftly forward, and in spite of his struggles bound him securely to the rack.

They then paused, and looked to the baron for further orders.

He resumed his pipe, leisurely omitted a few puffs of smoke from his lips, and then said:

"Give a gentle turn, my men—just enough to make

every bone in his body ache. I think that a few hours of such discipline will be sufficient to bring him to his senses."

The order was promptly obeyed, and after a few moments the exquisite torture of his constrained position thrilled through every nerve in the unfortunate prisoner's frame.

He did not cry out, for his mind was yet firm and clear, and with the despairing wish that he might die before his tormentors returned Oliver resigned himself to the endurance of the suffering from which there seemed to be no escape.

The four men left him alone, and as the moments passed slowly on his anguish, both of body and mind, seemed to increase.

An hour passed, and the strained position in which he was bound became so insupportable that he could not restrain the groans of suffering that forced their way to his lips.

Could it really be meant to leave him there to perish alone? He began to believe that such was the intention of his captors, when a step sounded beside him, and a soft, low-toned voice spoke:

"Poor fellow—poor fellow; it is sad to be brought to such a pass as this. Herr Darvel, are you insensible, or do you understand what I am saying to you?"

Oliver made an effort to see the speaker, and as she bent forward he recalled the face he had dimly seen in the steward's cottage on the night before his escape from Berchtholz.

He faintly asked:

"Who are you, and whence do you come? How have you learned my true name?"

"I heard it from my kinsman, Franz Herman, who no longer speaks of you as M. Ledru. I am Katrina, the cousin of the man who saved your life on that fearful night at Berchtholz. I have made my way hither at the command of the Duchess of Lindorf. I bring to you her injunctions to save yourself by ascertaining anything that may be demanded of you. The daughter can no longer be injured by anything you may say."

"It is true, then, that the child is dead. But how have you gained admittance here?"

"Hugel is my lover; he is trusted by the prince, so I found a way to get to you. He instructed me how to turn this crank to give you more ease. There—now we can speak together more comfortably."

The sudden relaxation of the strained position in which he had so long been held afforded Oliver the most exquisite relief.

The girl had brought wine with her, which she held to his lips, and when the deadly faintness from which he was suffering was in some measure relieved she compassionately said:

"You seem very weak, Herr Darvel, but as I cannot remain much longer you must hear what I have to say. I beg that you will first listen to me while I read aloud what my cousin Herman has written to you."

"Then he has not deserted me. I am listening; pray go on, for I shall perfectly understand you. If you have anything to say that can enable me to release myself from this suffering I shall be only too thankful."

"I have only my lady's commands to lay on you, and she is most anxious that you shall avail yourself of any chance to escape from the indignities to which Prince Ernest will subject you to bend you to his will. When I have read what my cousin says you will understand better the only course that he thinks will be expedient for you."

"Where is Herman, and how long is it since you saw him?"

"He is not very far off. After he left Berchtholz I was sent here in disgrace; three days ago he came hither to see me, and a few hours afterwards the prince sent on a courier with orders to have the house prepared for the reception of his bride. My cousin concealed himself in the neighbourhood, but he has managed to find out all that has happened here."

"With you in the house that was no difficult matter."

"No, not very; and now, with your permission, I will read my letter, monsieur."

She drew from the pocket of her apron a small envelope without any address, and proceeded to read the following lines:

"Mr. Darvel,—My cousin, Katrina, who is worthy of trust, will be the bearer of this. It is the most earnest wish of the duchess that you shall suffer no more in a cause into which you have been so strangely and unwillingly dragged. She desires that you will make peace with your enemies on the easiest terms for yourself, for it matters little now what you say to them, or for them."

"All is lost! The heiress of Lichtenfels is dead, and if the new Princess of Berchtholz doubts the fact, assure her of its truth from my authority. I have also endeavoured to infuse doubts in Lady Gertrude's

mind on another score I have since regretted. She is too impetuous a woman to be tortured with impunity. I feel the sincerest sympathy for her, and I am sorry that I tried to make her unhappy, only that she might torment her husband.

"The story I sent her of a rival is now without foundation, for my foster-sister, Erminia Rosen, who was once the beloved of Prince Ernest, is no longer in the way of anyone. The ship in which she sailed for Canada was wrecked, and she and her young son perished.

"Thus fate seems to delight in clearing all obstruction from the path of the Prince of Berchtols. You can use this letter to effect your own deliverance. Prince Ernest will give much to have the mind of his wife disabused of the suspicions I have taken pains to infuse into it through my anonymous communications, and you can make your own terms with him.

"Since the Lady Irene is really dead there will be no motive for following you up, even if they still persist in the belief that you are Eugène Ledru. Your friend,
FRANZ HERMAN."

Oliver listened with intense interest, and when Katrina paused he quickly asked:

"Are you quite sure the letter you have just read was written by Herman?"

"Sure! Why, of course I am, for my cousin placed it in my own hands not two hours ago, and commanded me to use all my influence with Hugel to get admitted to you. To serve you I came hither at a great risk to myself, and I hope, Herr Darvel, that you do not think I would play you false."

There was a tone of injured feeling in her voice, and Oliver hastened to say:

"Pardon me, Fraulein; but so many deceptions have been played off on me since I became entangled in this wretched business that I scarcely know whom to trust. I believe your assurance, and I thank you with all my heart for venturing so much in my behalf."

"Then you will act as my cousin wishes?"

"What else is left me? Besides, I am not unwilling to perform the service that Herman asks of me. I can now comply with the commands of the prince with a clear conscience."

She thrust the letter in his breast, and said:

"Then you will be quite safe. Adieu, monsieur; it will not be long before the baron will come hither to learn what course you will take. I am certain that you will save yourself; but, should they prove false to their promises, my cousin will find the means of assisting you again. Be sure that you shall not be left to perish without an attempt to rescue you being made."

The last words were uttered as Katrina receded from his side; but in the position in which he was bound Oliver could not see at what point she disappeared.

Mind and body both relieved from the painful tension in which they had so long been held, Oliver at length fell asleep, and dreamed that he was again in his native land seated beside his beloved Mabel, her hand clasped in his own, and her tender eyes suffused with tears, as she listened to the story of the sufferings he had borne.

From this pleasant delusion he was aroused by the entrance of the baron, who sat down near him, and, after puffing at his everlasting pipe for many moments, at length calmly inquired:

"How is it with you now, my young friend? Have you learned wisdom from suffering, or are you still obstinately determined to perish in the cause of what you call truth? Bah! the people of this generation have stopped up the well at the bottom of which the fable says it is to be found. Come, enlighten me now: to what conclusion you have arrived at. Shall the beautiful vampire banquet on your blood, or will you accept freedom in exchange for the trifling service my nephew requires at your hands?"

Oliver frankly replied:

"Unbind me, and I will trust to your promises so far, at least, as to test their value, by consenting to do what the Prince of Berchtols demands. If I be permitted to see the princess alone, I will show her the letter Fritz brought to me as from Herman, and I will furthermore convince her that the information it contains is true."

"Oh, ho!" laughed the fat baron; "the bone-setter has done your business, as I thought it would. Neither my nephew nor I will object to a private interview between you and the princess, provided you pledge your word to convince her that Irene of Lichtenfels is dead. After that is accomplished I presume you will be glad to know what will be done with yourself?"

With some bitterness Oliver replied:

"It is useless for me to make terms which you would either fulfil or ignore as suited your own interests. But since the heiress is really dead, I can see no motive for the farther persecution of so obscure an individual as I am."

"Really, you reason very well, my young friend, and I give you credit for your shrewdness. No; we shall have no farther use for you, and you will be sent safe on your way; let that suffice."

He uttered a shrill whistle, and the two men in crape masks again appeared, bearing between them a large arm-chair.

At a signal from him Oliver was released, his clothing rearranged, and he was placed in the chair, but so benumbed by the painful position in which he had been confined that he could scarcely move.

The men seemed to understand this, for they rubbed his limbs briskly for several moments, and then the taller one addressed the baron:

"My lord, the prisoner is now quite ready to be removed."

"Move forward with him, then, and take him into the presence of the princess."

At this command the chair was lifted, and, with its burden, borne rapidly away from the torture-chamber, which Oliver devoutly hoped he should never behold again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

In the same apartment in which we last saw them sat the Prince of Berchtols and his wife.

An expression of triumph sat on his face while doubt and expectation were legible in hers.

The confession she had wrung from her husband that he had been sufficiently infatuated with another woman even to bestow his hand upon her in spite of the wide social gulf that yawned between them had filled her heart with a gnawing sense of jealousy and mistrust towards him.

The man who could coolly set aside so sacred a bond as that which bound him to Erminia Rosen must be hard of heart and reckless of consequences, and haughty as she was, Gertrude of Guildestein trembled when she reflected how completely in his power she herself was.

In spite of her threat concerning her kinsmen, she knew well that the only one among them who would concern himself about her fate was too great an invalid to interfere personally for her protection, either from insult or even from personal violence.

Vainly she asked herself if she could really feel herself to be the lawful wife of Prince Ernest while her rival lived, and a feeling of bitter resentment, that might yet bear fearful fruit, began to surge in her heart against him who had dared to place her in so false a position.

Both love and ambition held her firmly bound to his side, for she was passionately attached to him, and her haughty spirit recoiled from the thought of demanding from his hands justice for herself, and also for the discarded wife and son.

How could she place herself before the world in such an attitude as that? How proclaim herself the usurper of another's rights, and endure the bitter humiliation of openly acknowledging that the rank she had panted to attain had only stained her with dishonour, and left her an object of contemptuous pity to the world.

Her proud spirit writhed within her as these thoughts passed through her mind, and impulsive in all she did, she often uttered them aloud to Prince Ernest with bursts of passionate reproach which made his graven spirit quail within him, for like all men of his stamp, the Prince of Berchtols was a coward.

He managed to quiet her, at last, by the solemn assurance that when his prisoner was thoroughly aroused from the stupor into which he had fallen after his long exposure to the cold, he should be brought before her, and she might question him herself till every doubt was cleared from her mind.

Compelled to trust to this promise, towards the close of that stormy and wretched night the princess fell into a disturbed slumber, produced by the sleeping-potion which her husband adroitly mingled with the posset that was placed beside her bed every night.

The narcotic held her senses bound till a late hour of the following day, and this interval enabled the prince to use his powers of compulsion against the helpless prisoner, with what result has already been seen.

After the first interview with Oliver the baron and his nephew retired to the chamber of the former, and summoned Katrina before them. This dame had spoken the truth with reference to her expulsion from Berchtols in disgrace after she had confessed the part played by herself and Herman in the rescue of Oliver. But for the intercession of Hugel she would have been more severely punished, but the big German was useful to the prince, and for his sake Katrina was only banished for a season from Berchtols.

The prince now rejoiced that he had been so lenient, for he had thus established a claim on the girl's gratitude which he determined to put to the test. She came in, trembling with dread as to what might

follow this summons, but his gracious manner soon reassured her. To her surprise he offered to permit her to return to the castle as the personal attendant of his wife, provided she would perform a service for him which was of vital importance. He represented to her that she would injure no one, and materially serve both the princess and himself by implicitly obeying his directions.

A purse filled with glittering gold pieces was held up before her, and promises made to place Hugel in such a position of trust as would enable him to marry her at once, and place her almost in the position of a lady.

She tossed her coquettish head at this last suggestion, but a smile broke over her lips which assured the tempter that, in spite of her airs, it had great weight with her.

Katrina finally undertook to carry out the deception on which Prince Ernest knew so much depended, and the letter she had read aloud to Oliver in his dungeon was written by the baron.

Hugel was then summoned to escort her to the prisoner, and with the result of the interview the plotters were entirely satisfied.

When Lady Gertrude awoke the sun was almost setting, and she marvelled how she could have so overslept herself.

Her head felt very heavy and her spirits depressed, but by the time she had made a careful toilet and taken some refreshment, she felt quite restored to her usual state of health.

In the first moment of restored consciousness the recollection of her husband's promise darted into her mind, and as soon as her chocolate was drunk she left her own apartment, and went into the drawing-room in search of him.

He had been duly informed that she was preparing to join him, and he entered the room by one door as she passed through an opposite one.

All trace of the annoyance of the previous night had left his brow, and he advanced to greet her with his brightest and most winning expression.

"I hope my angel is in a better humour this morning, or rather evening, for it verges towards night. Dearest Gertrude, you will never again act towards me as you did last night, for I am going to prove to you that all your fears are unfounded. A courier came to me this morning with news that will be most welcome to you, but if I tell it you you will refuse to believe it."

"Then how am I to learn it?" she coldly asked.

"The man who is about to be brought before you will confirm it, my love. I shall leave him to tell his own story, and I am sure you will believe it, mistrustful as you are."

She regarded him doubtfully as she asked:

"How am I to feel sure that this man has not been influenced to impose on me a made-up story?"

"Oh, as to that, I shall soon leave you to decide for yourself. You will soon see that this poor wretch is incapable of deception."

At this assurance her brow cleared a little, and she permitted him to take her hand and raise it to his lips, but withdrawing it again almost immediately, she spoke, with all her native hauteur:

"Confront the bearer of this evidence with me. He has surely had time enough to rest by this hour."

"I have already anticipated your impatience, my regal sultana, and my uncle has gone to prepare him for an interview with you. You must not be surprised at finding him unable to stand in your presence, for he has not yet recovered from the freezing he underwent yesterday. Hark! I hear the steps of the men approaching with him now."

The arras was lifted from the recess, and the bearers of Oliver came through the door leading into the servants' corridor. They advanced, and placed their pallid and exhausted burden in front of those who were awaiting his appearance.

Oliver lifted his eyes to the face of the queenly-looking woman before him, and forlorn as his own position was, his heart was filled with compassion for her, as he thought she had married the hard-hearted man beside her for love.

Just in proportion to her affection for him he felt assured would be her sufferings in the future, but he was far from comprehending the mixture of pride, passion and bitterness which lay at the foundation of this fair creature's character.

Suffer! yes—keenly enough, and with an abandon unknown to one of a different temperament, but out of that very suffering would grow a marble power of endurance—a stinging desire for vengeance on him who had crushed her dream of pride and happiness, and the hour was yet to come in which her husband would most fervently wish that the earth had opened and engulfed him, or that lightning from heaven had scathed him, before he took this Nemesis to his heart.

But she, at this moment, stood quiet and submissive enough beside him to learn the truth or falsehood of

his late assertions. She at once addressed Oliver in her clear, ringing tones.

"If you have anything important to say to me speak it out at once, for I cannot bear suspense. Prince Ernest, send these men away; they have no business here."

"Give me time, my love, and I will not only send them, but go myself and take my uncle with me. I leave you to confer with this man alone, that you may not think what he has to say is influenced by myself or the baron. In half an hour he should finish all he was to tell you, and at the end of that time I will return."

He took the baron's arm and retired, followed by the two attendants.

When the door closed on them the princess cast a piercing glance on the prisoner, and impetuously cried out:

"I believe that you will tell me the truth. You look as if you would not falsely that even to save yourself from the power of a bad man. Tell me, as you hope for salvation hereafter, if the revelation you are about to make to me is to be relied on."

To this impetuous address Oliver replied, with sad gravity:

"Madam, so far as I am certain of anything in my present position, I am sure that the information I can give you is correct. I have a letter from the former steward of the prince, which reached me in such a manner as to leave no doubt of its genuineness in my own mind. If it were necessary, I think I could swear that it was written by Herman's own hand, and I hope you will not suspect me of an intention to deceive you."

While he was speaking her eyes never moved from his face, and she then deliberately said:

"I believe you. If a face can ever be an index to character, yours is noble and truthful. Give me the letter to which you refer."

Oliver drew from his breast the missive so lately placed there by Katrina, and with a respectful bend of his head offered it to her.

Eagerly, almost breathlessly, did she run over the lines, and the luminous glow that lit up her whole face showed how welcome were the tidings she had learned.

"Dead—dead!" she muttered. "Gone so far away that neither mother nor child shall ever cross my path. Now, indeed, is Ernest mine—mine! Yes, it was heartless in him to rejoice, as he evidently did, that his son was lost. Oh! his heart is hard, even to me. He loves me, I am sure of that. The heiress really dead, too. I am now truly Princess of Berchtholz, and my husband is my own."

Oliver watched her while she thus communed with herself, and he thought that it would be difficult to find a fairer or grander-looking representative of the state to which this beautiful woman had lately been elevated, but he pitied her from the depths of his soul, and helpless and friendless as he himself was, he would not have exchanged positions with her. She presently turned gently towards him and said:

"Now explain how this letter came into your possession, and why you are convinced that Herman was the writer of it."

"If your highness will promise to keep my secret I will confide the whole truth to you. That will satisfy you that I am attempting no imposition, and your word once pledged to me, I am certain that I can rely on it."

"You may—I pledge you my honour that your confidence shall be sacred. Now speak."

"My revelation will involve the safety of one in this house, my lady, and I must ask protection for her."

"Aha! a woman is mixed up with it, then! But your prayer is granted, monsieur. Since this person has been the means of doing me a great service, I promise not only protection, but favour. I will make her one of my attendants, if she should desire it."

Thus assured that no harm would befall Katrina, Oliver related the interview between himself and that young person.

The lady listened with eager attention, and at the close of the narration said:

"I am satisfied of the truth of what you have told me, and I take the opportunity of assuring you that the inestimable service you have rendered me shall not be rewarded by treachery. I will myself ascertain that you have been set free and permitted to go whither you please."

"A thousand thanks, madam: I was about to request protection from you, but I fear that—"

"Fear nothing," she impetuously interrupted; "for my promise shall be fulfilled, and here comes the prince to confirm it."

As she spoke the door opened and Prince Ernest came in, smiling triumphantly. Regardless of Oliver's presence, the impulsive creature threw herself upon his breast, crying out, in tones of passionate emotion:

"Oh, love, darling, adored! all is clear between us

once more. The bond that unites us is strong as death and lasting as eternity. Oh! I am deliciously, madly happy."

The prince laughed gaily as he said:

"And I am almost as happy as you, my beautiful. Has it not also been proved to you that you will, in due time, become Electress of Lichtenfels? I trust that will satisfy your ambitious aspirations, my charmer."

"Oh, Ernest, forgive me for doubting, for tormenting you; but I was mad with jealous doubts: there—forget the scenes I have lately made you pass through, and I will try to be reasonable—indeed I will."

Prince Ernest smiled as he replied:

"I hope so; but I am afraid the resolution will only last till another tempest of passion arises in your breast. My dear, impetuous darling, you must learn to control yourself, or we can never be happy together."

"Don't express a doubt as to that just now, for I mean to be as happy as a queen—as the queen of your heart should be, my proud and noble love."

While this byplay lasted the two stood behind the large chair in which Oliver was placed, and their tones were so lowered that he could not distinguish what was passing between them.

The prince now advanced to him and playfully said to his wife:

"This young man has then been fortunate enough to set your doubts at rest, Madame la Princesse?"

"Perfectly; I have a letter written by Herman, which assures me of all I wish to know. I will show it to you, but you are not to pry into what has passed between the gentleman and myself."

"Your will shall be my law in this affair. Since M. Ledru has succeeded in establishing peace between us by confirming what I have vainly asserted to you, I am satisfied to remain in ignorance of how your confidence was won."

The princess joyfully turned to Oliver, and said: "You hear that, monsieur? I hope that you are willing for me to retain this letter, the contents of which are so precious to me."

He bowed respectfully.

"It is of more importance to your highness than to me, and I therefore willingly resign it into your possession. But, in return, I entreat that you will obtain some assurance that my safety shall be guaranteed and freedom given me to go whither I please."

Before she could reply the prince haughtily broke in:

"That much has already been promised you, monsieur. The service for which you were brought hither has been performed, and now your presence is no longer needed. As soon as you are sufficiently recovered you will be sent in safety on your way."

He rang the bell that stood upon the table, and the two attendants appeared.

As a sign from their master they advanced and lifted the chair to bear him away.

But before they could accomplish this the princess rushed impulsively towards him, and tearing a jewelled bracelet from her arm, offered it to him, saying:

"Take that as the reward of your candour, and with it my most fervent thanks. You do not know how inestimable is the service you have rendered me—but I do. Adieu, monsieur, may holy angels guard and guide you to a place of safety."

The prince drew her gently but firmly back, and the men passed out, closing the door behind them.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

WHY is a lady's belt like a scavenger? Because it goes round and gathers up the waist.

VINES will grow admirably on a railway embankment, because they are sure to be well trained.

A CONVICT who was about to be sent to a house of correction was told that they would set him at picking oakum. "Let 'em try it, by goah," said he, "I'll tear their darned oakum all to pieces."

A SINGULAR incident occurred, we hear, lately at Compiegne. Whilst the company were waiting in a saloon for the Emperor and Empress, Marshal Randon, Minister of War, and Count Goltz, Prussian Ambassador, going up to him with a smirk, said, "Well, Marshal! And so you are busily occupied with us still, are you?" "With you—the Prussians?" "Yes—your reorganization of the army, you know, directed against us!" "Non—, nous nous —!" But no. Give the Marshal's precise language, still less translate it, I cannot. It was too energetic. But a mild version of it was: "No; we are occupied with the army for ourselves and not for you. We don't care for you, and can smash you at any time!"

Such language, which by the way was rather loudly uttered, for the Marshal was out of temper, created, as may be supposed, a little excitement. At the same moment the Empress entered with the Emperor, and her Majesty asked what was the matter. "Oh! your Majesty!" answered the Marshal, "here's the Prussian Ambassador thinks that we are afraid of the Prussians, and I have been telling him that we are not!"

MIND AND MATTER-OF-FACT.

Cotton-Man (fro' Shoddydale).—"What dun yo' co'n that wayter?"

Coachman.—"Ah, ain't it beautiful? That's Grassmere Lake, that is—"

Cotton-Man.—"Yo' co'n 'um all is-akes an' mores i' these pa-arts. We co'n 'um rezzer-voyers where ah com' fro'!"—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK.—Our butcher's daughter, who is an excellent pianist, prefers to all other music that of—Chopin.—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

WHY is gravel-digging Sir Thomas Wilson, of Hampstead, the rarest creature in the world? Because he is always making holes in his manors.—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS.

Bossor (down upon little Stannery, who's a great boaster about his "Steel" acquaintance, and his extensive "Travel," and this year especially down Palestine way).—"Did you see the Bardanelles?"

Stannery.—"Eh? The—oh? Oh, yo'—yes! Jolly fellows as ever I met! Dined with 'em at Vienna!" [Little S. has left the Club.]—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

SPORTING INTELLIGENCE.—The man who came to a check in the hunting-field didn't pocket it. The master of the hounds subsequently "drew" on a bank in the neighbourhood.—*Punch's Pocket-book, 1867.*

POST-OFFICE REGULATIONS.—1. Letters may be sent under cover of night, but the clerks are not to be enveloped in darkness. 2. Postmasters must have the Stamp of respectability about them. 3. The Postmaster-General is not to accept any Foreign Orders.—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

SELF-RESPECT.

The Missus.—"Oh, Jem, you said you'd give me your photograph. Now, let's go in, and get it done."

Jem.—"Oh, I dessay! an' 'ere my 'Carte de Wisete' stuck up in the winder along o' all these 'ere bally-gale an' 'Igh-Church parsons? No, Sairey."—*Punch's Almanac, 1867.*

NOTES BY H.R.H. IN RUSSIA. (Communicated.) In Circassia the hairdressers have organized a mounted corps. Each man provides his own Circassian cream, and rides it. There is a report that in consequence of their proficiency on horseback the name of Circassia is to be changed to *Circus-sia*, and Mr. Batty will be made Emperor.—*Punch's Pocket-book, 1867.*

HE HAD A PAIR.

A young fellow of our acquaintance, whose better half had just presented him with a pair of bouncing twins, attended Rev. Mr. — a church one Sunday evening.

During the discourse the clergyman looked right at our innocent friend, and said, in a tone of thrilling eloquence:

"Young man, you have an important responsibility thrust upon you."

The new-fledged dad, supposing that the preacher alluded to his peculiar home event, considerably startled the audience by replying:

"Yes, I have two of them."

"Why don't you present yourself as a candidate for Parliament?" asked a lady of her husband, who was confined with the rheumatism. "Why should I, my dear?" inquired he: "I've no qualification for the station." "But I think you have," returned the wife; "your language and actions are truly parliamentary. When bills are presented you either order them to be laid on the table, or you make a motion to rise; though often out of order, you are still supported by the chair; and you often poke your nose into measures which are calculated to destroy the constitution."

AMONGST the many anecdotes respecting bank breaking is one relative to the failure of the Royal British Bank. One of the customers of the bank was a certain old Indian officer who was always talking about his connection with the concern. When the first rumours of its difficulties began to be spread about this gentleman's friends advised him to go down to the City and withdraw his balance; but to these requests the officer turned a deaf ear. "A soldier, sir," he said, "must stand by his flag; and I am not the man to leave a sinking ship." At last the bank broke, and his friends reproached him for his infatuated confidence. "Gentle-

men," was his remark, when he heard their statement, "your news is excellent. Henceforth I cannot be dunned for my overdrawn account till the liquidators have got to work."

A GOOD REASON WHY.

"Sir," said a fierce lawyer, "do you, on your solemn oath, declare this is not your handwriting?"
 "I reckon not," was the cool reply.
 "Does it resemble your handwriting?"
 "Yes, sir, I think it don't."
 "Do you swear that it don't resemble your writing?"
 "Well I do."
 "You take your solemn oath that this writing does not resemble yours in a single letter?"
 "Y-e-s-s, sir."
 "Now how do you know?"
 "Cause I can't write!"

We cut the following advertisement from the *Birmingham Post*:—"Wanted, a general servant, in a small family, where a man is kept. The house work and cooking all done by the members of the family. The gentleman of the house rises early, but prepares breakfast himself. All the washing is put out, and the kitchens provided with every comfort and luxury. Cold meat and hash studiously avoided. Wages no objection to a competent party. References and photographs exchanged."

"THE HUNT'S UP."

Scene.—*Undergraduate's Rooms at Oxford.*
Scout (knocking).—"Hot water, sir!"
Voice from within.—"What sort of a morning is it?"
Scout.—"Freezing hard, sir!"
Voice.—"Then call me when there's a thaw."—*Fun.*

NOMINALLY GEOGRAPHICAL.—A correspondent, who signs himself an "An Agonized Atlas," implores us to inform him whether Hann-kow, in China, is any relation to John Bull in England. He had better apply to the Geographical Society at its next meeting.—*Fun.*

FOR DIVORCE REASONS.

Reverend Gent.—"But you really can have no serious reason to wish to be parted from your wife?"
Rustic.—"Well, no, sir! I likes my wife well enough, but, you see, she don't please mother!"—*Fun.*

RUNNING SPIRITS.—The *Court Circular* states that Mr. Home, the spiritualist, has challenged Mr. Addison, the medium *malgré lui*, to a flying race for two miles. We are a little too "fly" to accept this as fact; but we should like to see a contest which would be conducted with so much spirit;—if we may believe the spiritualists, which, of course, we may—only we don't.—*Fun.*

BRAVO, SOUTH WESTERN!—The South Western Railway has set a good example to the other companies. It devotes special compartments to smoking, and henceforth there will be two nuisances the less on that line. The man who didn't want to smoke, but only smoked because it was wrong, and annoyed other people, will be without a plea, and without a pleasure in consequence, and there will be no farther occupation for the testy old gentleman who "has no objection to smoking as smoking, but objects to it in a railway on principle."—*Fun.*

WHAT A FIB!

Julia.—"Gusta, dear, do see the love of a bouquet Captain Dash gave me!"
Gusta (who is a little jealous).—"Yes, dear, it's very pretty. He offered it to me before you came down."—*Punch.*

MEDICAL.—It has been observed that in northern countries the cold invariably proceeds to extremities.—*Punch.*

BROWN TO JONES.

(After MARTIAL.)

No; Manhood Suffrage, Jones, I do not fear.
 Given—Man, calm, honest, thoughtful and sincere;
 But to the bullying Brute who yells and greans
 I will not give a Beasthood suffrage, Jones.

Punch.

THE SAME THING UNDER ANOTHER NAME.—People are unreasonable enough to complain of their horses being lamed over the sharp granite now being widely laid down on the West-end thoroughfares, and to insist upon it that as Lord John Manners promised a steam-roller to macadamize the rough stone, a steam-roller should be employed. Lord John may at least plead that he has set several hundred horse-power to the work.—*Punch.*

NOBLE CONDUCT OF SIR THOMAS WILSON.

The *Times* publishes a copy of a very brief but very gratifying letter addressed by Sir Thomas M. Wilson to a resident at Hampstead, who had written to Sir Thomas in reference to the Heath. We also sub-

join it, from the *Times*, but we have the additional pleasure of stating that the letter to which it is a reply pointed out to Sir Thomas Wilson that it would be very agreeable to the inhabitants of London, if they were permitted to mark out a race-ground, and erect a stand, with a view to holding races on the Heath. This explains the answer, which, as given by our contemporary is,

"Charlton House, Dec. 7, 1866.

"Sir,—Take your own course.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,
 "THOMAS MARTON WILSON."

Arrangements will at once be made for carrying out the plan so generously assented to by Sir T. M. Wilson.—*Punch.*

TO A UNITED ITALY.*

BLEST Italy! to whom 'tis given
 To breathe once more as freemen breathe,
 Fearless to raise thine eyes to heaven,
 And round thy brow the olive wreath.

From deepest trance thou hast awoke,
 Hast rent the chain, and thou art free;
 Art loosed at last from foreign yoke,
 And worthy so art found to be.

From snowy mount to sunny strand
 Rise tales of suffering and of wrong;
 But these are hushed, oh, beauteous land!
 In distant trump of ancient song.

Oh, Italy! "the truth shall last;"
 See that thy future still excel
 In strength and purity thy past,
 Nor pride again ring out thy knell.

E. M. C. R.

GEMS.

A DISPOSITION to exaggerate is at once the vice and the mistake of the world.

THE cure of all the ills and wrongs, the cares and sorrows, and the crimes of humanity, lies in that one word, Love!

VALUABLE HINTS.—Lavater says, "He who sedulously attends, pointedly asks, calmly speaks, coolly answers, and ceases when he has no more to say, is in possession of some of the best requisites of man."

IN mixed company be readier to hear than to speak, and put people upon talking of what is in their own way; for then you will both oblige them, and be most likely to improve by their conversation.

HAPPINESS.—We sometimes run about a whole day seeking what we have unwittingly left at home. So we often throw aside content, but presently having occasion for it again, we search for it everywhere but in the right place.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A DOSE of half a grain of bromide of cadmium dissolved in warm water is a powerful emetic, three times more so than tartar-emetic, and twelve times more effective than sulphate of zinc.

To render labels for bottles extremely durable, coat the labels with white of egg and steam it until it becomes opaque, then dry it in an oven at 212 deg. The albumen becomes hard and transparent, and is unaffected by oils or acids.

TO MAKE TOUGH BEEF TENDER.—Carbonate of soda will be found a remedy for the evil. Cut the steaks, the day before using, into slices about two inches thick, rub over them a small quantity of soda, wash off next morning, cut it into suitable thickness, and cook to taste. The same process will answer for fowls, legs of mutton, &c. Try it, all who love delicious, tender dishes of meat.

ANTIDOTE.—A German forest keeper, eighty-two years old, not wishing to carry to the grave with him an important secret, has published in the *Leipzig Journal* a recipe he has used for fifty years, and which, he says, has saved several men and a great number of animals from a horrible death by hydrophobia. The bite must be bathed as soon as possible with warm vinegar and water, and when this has dried a few drops of muriatic acid poured upon the wound will destroy the poison of the saliva, and relieve the patient from all present or future danger.

WASHING-POWDER.—Take one pound of sal soda and half a pound of unslaked lime, and boil twenty minutes; let it stand till cool, then drain off and put into a strong jug or jar. Soak your dirty clothes overnight, or until they are wet through, then wring them out and rub on plenty of soap, and in one boiler of clothes, well covered with water, add one teaspoonful

* From "Fawcett's Fashionable Repository for 1867."

of washing-fluid. Boil half an hour briskly, and then wash them thoroughly once through suds; rinse, and your clothes will look better than by the old way of washing before boiling. This is an invaluable recipe, and I want every poor tired woman to try it.

STATISTICS.

MANUFACTURE OF BOTTLE CORKS.—The manufacture of bottle corks is one of the chief sources of wealth in the province of Gironde, which produces annually about 125,000 quintals of cork. To supply the demand of the manufacture, which annually consumes 155,000 quintals, 30,000 quintals of rough cork are imported, principally from Andalusia, Estramadura, and from the district of Arenys de Mar, in the province of Barcelona; 8,000 persons of both sexes are employed in this industry. Of this number, 3,340 workmen are employed in cork cutting. The annual production amounts to 1,283,000 thousand bottle corks, of the approximate value of 15,500,000*l.* The raw material may be estimated at the value of 3,000,000*l.* The most important places where this industry is carried on are San Felice de Guixois, Palafargell, Palajos, Darnius and Junquera.

ANGLO-INDIAN TELEGRAPHY.—The time of transmission between London and Bombay, Madras, or Calcutta, has varied from two hours to sixteen days, and that the average number of messages received from India is about thirty per day. The cost of a message of twenty words to India is 5*l.* 1*s.*, of which the International Telegraph Company receives 3*s.* 6*d.*, the Austro-Germanic Union, 10*s.* 6*d.*; the Turkish authorities, 1*l.* 8*s.*; and the Persian Gulf and Indian lines, 2*l.* 10*s.* The total number of telegrams sent from the United Kingdom to India in 1865 was 11,070, realizing nearly 33,000*l.*, whereas 8,403 messages were sent westward, representing 28,000*l.* The telegraphic communication between India and the Continent gives a total of 2,500 messages, and the returns of the Indo-European telegraph from all sources during the ten months ending the 31st of December, 1865, amounted to 69,770*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE total French force in Mexico is 28,000 men and 4,000 horses.

A COMPANY is at work preparing to take visitors to and from the Paris Exhibition in balloon omnibuses.

A BIRMINGHAM manufacturer has constructed an alleged perfectly unpickable lock, and one that cannot be blown open with gunpowder.

THE Metropolitan Board of Works have expended upwards of £27,000 for property required for the southern embankment of the Thames.

THE roadway of the Thames Embankment will be four feet above Trinity high-water mark, a point to which the tide has never been known to reach.

IR may interest the English traveller to know that the line between Calais and Boulogne will be opened on the 7th of January, 1867.

THREE hundred rabbits' tongues formed the principal ingredients of a new dish served at Compiègne the other day.

A RAPID penman can write thirty words in a minute. To do this he must draw his quill through the space of sixteen and a half feet.

THE English ladies at Lyons have raised £760 by a fancy bazaar for the building of a Protestant church.

IT is said that a Bill will be introduced into the House of Commons next year for the prevention of the intolerable use of steam-whistles in London.

M. MEYER, head gardener to the King of Prussia, has been sent to Paris to design the Prussian horticultural garden in the park, which, it appears, will be one of the curiosities of the coming show.

ART-MARKING OF LINEN.—Since the process of photographing upon silk and linen has been perfected in France many persons have their portraits upon their linen instead of their names or initials. Washing, it is said, does not injure the portraits.

ONE firm in London consumes, on an average, the whites of two thousand eggs daily, or six hundred thousand annually, in the manufacture of albumenized paper for photographic printing. It is estimated that six millions are annually consumed in Great Britain for this purpose.

FOUR years ago an agriculturist on the Isle of Man planted a single grain of barley, producing the same year 300 grains. These were sown, and the second year's product was about half-a-pint, which were again sown, and yielded fourteen pounds, and on being sown again last spring realized this year seven bushels.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BELLA E.—Colour of hair light brown.
POLLY, eighteen, light hair, gray eyes, and good temper. Respondents must be dark and tall.
AMY, medium height, fair, large blue eyes, and curly hair, would like to correspond with a dark young man.
S. S. S., middle age, and with an income of 150*l.*, desires to correspond with a lady similarly circumstanced.
A SCHOLAR—Eton College was founded by Henry VII. in the year 1441, four hundred and twenty-five years since.
G., twenty-seven, very dark, a gentleman by birth and education, and independent. Respondent must be pretty and gentle.
MUSICIAN—You will find such a shop as you require on the north side of the Strand—nearly opposite Somerset House.
B. T. P. S.—We answered your question, by giving a recipe for the cleaning of straw bonnets, in No. 189 of THE LONDON READER.
CANADIAN—The easiest and cheapest method of having your piece of real seal-skin made into a cap or pouch would be to apply to a hat or cap maker; make your bargain first.
GEORGE DUFFY—Benzine colas would probably answer your purpose; the better and cheaper plan, however, would be to send the gloves to a regular glove-cleaner.
FLORENCE AND HELEN—"Florence," seventeen, fair, and blue eyes. "Helen," seventeen, fair hair, brown eyes, and not considered bad looking.
LOUISA, nineteen, fair, good looking, respectable, and industrious. Respondent must be a mechanic or sailor, about twenty or twenty-three.
MAGGIE C., seventeen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fair, thoroughly domesticated, and thinks she would make a good wife, but has no money.
HISTORIAN—King John was crowned four times—viz., on May 27, 1199; on October 8, 1200; on March 25, 1201; and on April 14, 1202.
ELKANOR—To prevent flies going on picture-frames and furniture, immerse a quantity of leeks for five or six days in a pail of water, and wash the pictures, &c., with it.
CAPTAIN ALICK—The ancestor of the royal family of England was Henry the Lion Duke of Brunswick, who married Maud, sixth daughter of Henry II. of England.
G. E. WHITTHAM—The story you mention is not published in volume form. You can only obtain it in the numbers of THE LONDON READER, as you must see for yourself; it is not even concluded as yet.
H. M.—The blushing of which you complain will cease with advancing years and frequent contact with general society. It is no sign of disease, but rather of modesty, or perhaps constitutional nervousness.
TREY H., sixteen, petite, dark eyes and hair, regular features, very fond of drawing and sketching, and loving disposition. Respondent must be well educated, lively and affectionate, and not more than twenty-four.
AUGUSTUS—The principle that the king never dies—*Le roi est mort, vive le roi*—that is, The king is dead, long live the king—was admitted legally only in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.
AGNES, seventeen, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark brown hair, gray eyes, good teeth, no money, but very domesticated. Respondent must be able to keep a wife comfortably; a Catholic preferred.
ARTHUR WROXLEY, very tall, handsome, moustache, very dark, and well connected, would like to correspond with a young lady of good personal appearance, and, if possible, having a little capital.
W. S. ST. A., 5 ft. 8 in. in height, fair hair and moustache, has been an officer in the army, and is now in business. Respondent must be good looking, a good figure, and with a small income; fair hair preferred.
ROBERT J., a shoe-maker by trade, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, very steady, not considered bad looking, and a member of a rifle corps band. Respondent must be an industrious young woman.
ANNIE AND ROSE (two cousins). "Annie," seventeen, tall, fair complexion, black hair, and dark blue eyes. "Rose," medium height, dark brown eyes, and fine figure; both will have 400*l.* a year left them by an uncle.
MAGGIE, twenty-one, medium height, fair complexion, loving disposition, light hazel eyes, and a musician. Respondent must be a respectable mechanic, about twenty-five or thirty; good looks of no importance.
POLITICAL STUDENT—The Premiers, or Prime Ministers of England, since the accession of George III., have been, respectively—Earl of Bute, 1762; Mr. Grenville, 1763; Marquis of Rockingham, 1765; Duke of Grafton, 1766; Lord North, 1770; Marquis of Rockingham, 1782; Lord Shelburne, 1783; Duke of Portland, 1789; Mr. Pitt, 1783; Mr. Addington, 1794; Mr. Pitt, 1804; Lord Grenville, 1806; Duke of Port-

land, 1807; Mr. Perceval, 1810, who was assassinated by Bellingham; Lord Liverpool, 1812; Mr. Canning, 1827; Lord Goderich, 1827; Duke of Wellington, 1828; Earl Grey, 1830; Viscount Melbourne, 1834; Sir Robert Peel, 1834; Lord Melbourne, 1835; Sir Robert Peel, 1841; Lord John Russell, 1846; the Earl of Derby, 1859; Viscount Palmerston, 1859; the Earl of Derby, 1859; Viscount Palmerston, 1859; Earl Russell, 1865; the Earl of Derby, 1866.

JOHN—Mr. John Bright, who is certainly a staunch Reformer, and a man of great earnestness of purpose, is one of the members for Birmingham; his colleague is Mr. W. Scholefield.

JACINTA—To make a clove cake take 1 lb. of sugar, 1 lb. of flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of butter, 4 eggs, a cup of milk, a little mace and cinnamon, and one teaspoonful of cloves; fruit if you like.

RED SHANKS—The qualifications necessary for a sorter, stamper, letter-carrier, or mail-guard, in the Post Office service are, a fair knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, a good character, and the interest of a Member of Parliament.

CHRYSTIE—We must decline to give the names of the chemical ingredients, together with the particulars for making various lights (for candles), on the grounds that they are dangerous, and the compounding of them by an unpractised hand very much more so.

SCHOLAS asks us, "Can a landlord or his agent demand six months' notice from a person that takes a shop and pays his rent every three months before he will take the key?"—The landlord is entitled to six months' notice terminable on the anniversary of the commencement of the tenancy.

STORM INSPIRATION.

Oh, heaven never seems so near to me
 As when the thunder shakes the frowning sky,
 And the red lightning, in its fiery glee,
 Tells the grand power of Him who reigns on high.
 When the deep winds take up the lofty chorus,
 And the great rain-drops gladden all the earth;
 And stormy ocean, with its voice enormous,
 Shouts till the crags resound with mighty mirth—
 'Tis then my soul doth thrill with holy joy,
 And dark despair invades my heart no more;
 And angel voices, free from earth's alloy,
 Seem whispering "peace" from yon celestial shore.
 C. N. S.

RICHARD—The House of Commons consists of 656 members, 498 of whom are English, 105 Irish, and 53 Scotch. By the constitution, the House must be dissolved every seven years, but the Sovereign (or his Minister for the time being), has also the power of dissolving it at any shorter period.

ROSINA BELL—1. Any respectable advertising agent would put your advertisement in a French paper, and there are hundreds of them to be found in The London Directory. 2. Your handwriting is tolerably good. 3. *Etiquette* is pronounced *et-ee*.

CYTHIA—1. The theatrical gentlemen you name are, most assuredly, very near relatives; we cannot, however, say, nor would we if we could, anything about the domestic relations of either gentleman. 2. It is perfectly true that Mr. Benjamin Webster is the present lessee of the Olympic Theatre.

EDITH AND BLANCHET—"Edith," twenty, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes, good tempered, and domesticated. "Blanche," 5 ft., dark brown hair and eyes, domesticated, and good tempered. Respondents must be about twenty-four or twenty-five.

CLARA—Next to the loss of life, that of time is most to be deplored. Time is more precious than gold, and yet we are careless of it; how many valuable hours are spent in idleness or frivolities?

"Is duty a mere sport, or an employ?
 Life an interested talent, or a toy?"
 that we should trifle with it. The way to live happily is to live usefully; every man has his place and work allotted him.

"God gives to every man
 The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
 That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
 Just in the niche he was ordained to fill."

LOVELY MONA, FLORENCE, AND MAUD—"Lovely Mona," seventeen, golden hair, hazel eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. "Florence," eighteen, dark curly hair, blue eyes, very fair, and clever at fancy work and music. "Maud," nineteen, dark hair and eyes, well educated, and ladylike.

HERALD—The order of the Garter was instituted by Edward III. in 1347; the order of the Thistle in 819 by King Achatus of Scotland; "St. Patrick" in 1783 by George III.; St. Michael and St. George in 1819; the Star of India by Queen Victoria in 1861; the "Bath" in 1399.

ELIZA AND EMILY—"Eliza," twenty, medium height, dark hair and gray eyes, good tempered, thoroughly domesticated, and well educated. "Emily," twenty, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, dark brown hair and eyes, hasty in temper, but very affectionate, and domesticated. Respondents must be fond of home.

A TWO YEARS' READER—1. You have no right to correspond with the young lady, aged nineteen, against the wish of her parents, and they have a right to open, and destroy, or return your letters. 2. Certainly you have no right to marry her without her parents' consent, nor will she, if a right-minded young person, consent to such a course.

LEMMING WORTH—"Self-Made; or, Out of the Depths," commenced in No. 1 of THE LONDON READER, May 16, 1863, and was concluded in No. 52. The story has not been published in volume form, but may be obtained in numbers, parts, or volumes of THE LONDON READER, by application to our publisher. It ran through about fifty-three numbers.

LELIE AND HILDA—"Lillie," seventeen, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, very fair, dark hair, and sparkling brown eyes. "Hilda," seventeen, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, very fair, dark hair, and sparkling brown eyes; both very fond of home and music, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondents must be tall, fair, with blue eyes, very fond of home, and not over twenty; Wesleyans and abstainers preferred.

G. A. R.—1. By watching the advertising columns of the daily papers you will see the premium required for midshipmen in the merchant service, about 100*l.* Premiums also are

required with apprentices; of course, the latter do not stand the same chance of rising to be mates and captains as the former. 2. A good middle-class education, including a knowledge of navigation, is necessary.

HARRY HARTLEY—1. Try glycerine, or glycerine soap, for the roughness of the skin. 2. A manual of politeness or of etiquette may be obtained of any bookseller. 3. As to the height of Her Majesty's Horse Guards, that is a matter of which you can obtain the best information from the recruiting staff, which may be seen daily parading the vicinity of the Horse Guards, Whitehall.

EMILY STANLEY AND VIRGINIA—How flippant—nay, how unfair to other correspondents, seeing the trouble we take to answer all communications—for one person to ask the same question under different signatures. The questions asked we have answered so frequently of late that we must advise our twin correspondents, "E. S." and "Virginia," to consult our recent numbers.

JOHN—We ought always to be actuated by a spirit of kindness and love in our intercourse with each other; all have troubles and trials, and as we pass through life they possibly may increase. The pathway of this world is sometimes strewn with roses, but the thorns are there also. How often is a sensitive mind bowed down under the accumulated burden of sorrow, anxiety, or care? An unkind word or act would add but another pang to the sad and weary heart.

EXETER—You are right. Roman wills were sealed with three seals, applied after the deeds had been pierced, and had passed the linen envelope three times through holes made for that purpose. This method was established in the time of Nero to prevent forgery. The names of those who had affixed their seals were written outside of the will; on the first page the names of those who were nominated the chief heirs were written, on the second those of the legatees.

JASPER—Most decidedly in different countries mourning was expressed by various signs; such as tearing their clothes, wearing sackcloth, laying aside omens of honour, was usual with the ancients. The colour of the dress to signify grief also varies; in Europe it is usually black, which, being the privation of light, is supposed to denote the termination of life; in China it is white; in Egypt yellow, representing the colour of leaves when they fall and flowers when they fade, typical that death is the end of all human hopes.

CONSTANT READER—Being so confident in the real utility of your invention, yet not having the means to "bring it out," by which, we suppose, you mean getting "letters patent," we can only advise you to go from shipowner to shipowner, or manufacturer to manufacturer, until you find one willing and able to take it up; take care, however, that you make a good bargain, that is, money down, and a reserved interest. Remember Arkwright, ultimately a millionaire, when as poor as yourself, after many struggles, managed to find a partner—and thereby a fortune.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

A. A. A. is responded to by—"P. G. L.," thirty-two, fond of children, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, dark hair and eyes, with a fresh colour, and considered pretty.

W. J. S. by—"L. Thompson," medium height, dark, prepossessing in appearance, with good expectations, and passionately fond of music.

E. F. E. by—"Rose of England," twenty-one, 5 ft. 1 in. in height, rather dark, curly hair, dark brown eyes, good tempered, and respectfully connected.

THOMAS by—"Eleanor," forty, a member of the Wesleyan community, who thinks she would just suit him.

C. S. by—"Grace," who thinks she would make him a good wife and an affectionate mother to his children.

ALPHA by—"M. A. J.," twenty-two, a country girl, brown hair, blue eyes, not pretty, but domesticated.

R. M. by—"Maggie," eighteen, rather short, brown curly hair, gray eyes, pale; no money.

A. H. by—"Lottie," eighteen, medium height, rather dark, very domesticated, and fond of music.

ARTHUR B. by—"F. C. D.," seventeen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, very domesticated, respectfully connected, and thinks she would make him a good wife; and—"F. N.," nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, dark hair and eyes, and good looking.

C. G. L. by—"L. W.," who, thinking "C. G. L." is a man of Christian principles and one she could love, would have no objection to become his wife and perform a mother's part to his children. "L. W." is thirty-two; and—"Mary A. J. B.," twenty-four, light hair, blue eyes, exceedingly fond of children, and who wants to make herself a home, as she is tired of service, and thinks she could make her husband's home comfortable.

EMERY by—"Maud," medium height, dark hair and eyes, and highly accomplished; and—"Cora Ashley," eighteen, medium height, dark eyes and hair, a good colour, pretty, fond of music, excels in singing, and with a very good temper.

LOUISA AND LIZZIE. The latter by—"R. H.," eighteen, 5 ft. 6 in., dark brown hair and eyes, very well educated, and able to keep a wife; a musician by profession.

JESSE AND LAURA. The former by—"Edmund B.," twenty-one, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, rather dark, steady, and a respectable mechanic.

LALY H. by—"S.," 5 ft. 10 in. in height, fair, and a gentleman by birth and education.

LIZZIE by—"L. S.," whose description answers very much to that required.

LAURA by—"Harry," twenty-seven, fair, 5 ft. 8 in., with an income of 200*l.* a year.

PART XLIV., FOR JANUARY, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6*d.*
 . Now Ready, VOL. VII. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4*s.* 6*d.*
 Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. VII. Price ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

(1) We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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